

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

U.S. gov't rejects talks with Tehran
brokered by European Union

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Labor board: Utah mine bosses can't vote for union

Miners use victory to press fight to organize

BY GUILLERMO ESQUIVEL
AND PAT MILLER

PRICE, Utah—Coal miners here scored another victory in their nearly 17-month-long struggle to win United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) union representation at the Co-Op mine near Huntington, Utah. On February 9 the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) announced its January 31 decision that the ballots cast by all Kingston family members—the owners of the mine—in the December 17 union representation election would not be counted.

The announcement of this ruling came on the heels of another favorable development for the miners. On February 1 the U.S. Department of Labor filed a complaint of discrimination on behalf of Ricardo Chávez, one of the miners. The labor department complaint asks the Mine Safety and Health Review Commission, a federal government body, to fine the mine bosses \$5,000 and pay Chávez for lost wages and training expenses. The Department of Labor made the decision on the grounds that the Co-Op bosses forced Chávez to undergo training at his own expense before rehiring him last summer, following the miners' nearly 10-month strike.

"The NLRB decision is a step forward," said José Contreras, a mechanic at the mine run by C.W. Mining, also known as Co-Op, referring to the January 31 ruling. "But we are not going to be satisfied until the labor board makes the decision on which we all go back to work, with union representation. We want a decision that is complete." The company fired Contreras and some 30 other miners a week before the union vote.

"We are encouraged and glad our just

cause has received another favorable decision by the NLRB," said Bill Estrada, another Co-Op miner. "But we can't wait around for a series of rulings to come our way. NLRB officials say finalizing the decisions about our fight is 'a great priority,' but they also say they 'can't give a good time frame on an ultimate resolution,' so we have to press ahead with the solidarity efforts that have gotten us this far."

The Co-Op miners have been using the recent decisions of the labor board to help expand and solidify support for the union struggle. Organizers of the effort to win UMWA representation said they are visiting all the miners at home to explain the latest decisions and discuss with them what is needed now to press the fight. Workers said they have been setting up information tables in working-class communities in the area to get the word out about developments in their struggle. They are also organizing a solidarity rally in Price, now set for March 12.

Co-Op miners said they have been invited to address the monthly meeting of UMWA Local 1769 at the nearby Deer Creek mine on February 15. This UMWA local, one of only two in the state of Utah, has been a key backer of the Co-Op miners.

Other unions are also making plans to further their support for the Co-Op miners. PACE District 11, which organizes oil, chemical and paper workers in the western region, is holding a conference in Reno, Nevada, March 5-6. PACE officers in the Salt Lake City area, who have been strong backers of the Co-Op miners, have invited

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Washington withdraws ambassador from Syria

Implies Syrian role in Beirut bombing
Escalates imperialist squeeze on Damascus

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Washington ratcheted up its pressure against the Syrian government following the February 14 bombing assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri. U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice announced the next day that the U.S. ambassador to Syria, Margaret Scobey, would be withdrawn from Damascus, the

country's capital, for "consultations," while an investigation into the assassination is carried out.

Washington used the occasion to press its demands that the Syrian government withdraw its troops from Lebanon. It also stepped up its allegations that Damascus is allowing the use of its territory by forces backing irregular units in Iraq that have been attacking the U.S.-led occupation troops in that country.

These steps lay the groundwork for intensification of the economic squeeze and military pressure by Washington on Syria if the U.S. government and its allies "prove" any link between Damascus and the bombing in Beirut. The government of Syrian president Bashar Al Assad has adamantly rejected the accusations.

"Following the murder of former Prime Minister Hariri, Ambassador Scobey delivered a message to the Syrian government expressing our deep concern as well as our profound outrage over this heinous act of terrorism," read the February 15 State Department statement announcing the

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Getty Images/AFP/Joseph Barrak

Some 200,000 people joined the funeral procession for Rafik Hariri, the former Lebanese prime minister slain in a bombing February 14. Marchers carried banners demanding Syria pull its troops out of Lebanon. Washington has seized on the assassination to ratchet up the pressure on Damascus to accede to U.S. demands, including withdrawal of its forces from Lebanon.

Links of Cuba and Africa highlighted at Havana launching of book by Sankara

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND CARLOS CORNEJO

HAVANA—"In this book, *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions*, Pathfinder presents five speeches by Thomas Sankara between 1983 and 1987 in which he expresses clearly and firmly his revolutionary ideas, not only in defense of his people but of all

the exploited of the world," said Ulises Estrada in opening a meeting held here February 10 as part of the annual Havana International Book Fair.

Estrada is the director of *Tricontinental* magazine, published by the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAAL). Some 70

people attended the event, which presented *Somos herederos de las revoluciones del mundo*, the recently published Spanish-language translation of the booklet. It was one of many book launchings organized throughout the fair, which took place February 3-13.

Thomas Sankara was the central leader of the 1983-87 popular revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso.

Speaking at the meeting, which Estrada chaired, were Manuel Agramonte, Cuba's ambassador to Burkina Faso during the four years of the revolutionary government there; Armando Hart, one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution and long-time minister of culture, who is today president of the José Martí Cultural Society; and Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press.

In 1965 Estrada was part of a leadership delegation sent to the Congo while Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara was leading a column of Cuban internationalists fighting alongside Congolese national liberation forces. Estrada has held a number of diplomatic posts in Africa and the Middle East over the years. As part of the Technical Vice-Ministry of Cuba's Interior Ministry in the mid-1960s, he was responsible for helping train members of the advance team of Cuban revolutionary fighters who went to Bolivia to lay the groundwork for the guerrilla front led by Guevara in that South American country in 1966-67.

Among those in the audience was a leadership delegation from the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution, including several people who were involved in Cuba's internationalist aid to African libera-

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Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Platform at Havana International Book Fair presentation of the Spanish-language translation of *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions* by Thomas Sankara. From left: Manuel Agramonte, former Cuban ambassador to Burkina Faso; Ulises Estrada, director of *Tricontinental* magazine (speaking); Armando Hart, a historic leader of the Cuban Revolution; and Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press.

N.Y. lawyer Lynne Stewart convicted of 'aiding terror'

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Attorney Lynne Stewart was convicted February 10, on all five charges against her of "conspiracy to provide material support to terrorist activity" and "defrauding" the government. The seven-month trial in federal court in New York "was the first time that the federal government has prosecuted a defense attorney in a terrorism case," the *Washington Post* reported.

Stewart, 65, was one of the lawyers for Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, from 1994 to 2002. Abdel-Rahman, a Muslim cleric, was convicted on frame-up charges of conspiracy to bomb the World Trade Center in 1993

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Palestinian Authority agrees to truce with Israeli government

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Palestinian Authority (PA) president Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon agreed to a cease-fire at a summit in Sharm el-Sheik, Egypt, February 8. In the week that followed, Abbas fired top security officials for failing to prevent mortar and rocket attacks on Israeli positions, and appears to have won de facto acceptance of the cease-fire from armed Palestinian groups Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. Tel Aviv took the first steps toward releasing a fraction of its Palestinian prisoners, withdrawing its forces from five Palestinian cities, and easing restrictions on travel into Israel by Palestinians living in the occupied territories.

Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and King Abdullah II of Jordan hosted the summit. At its conclusion both leaders announced they would return their ambassadors to Israel that they withdrew in September 2000. Cairo and Amman are the only governments in the Mideast that have signed peace accords with the Israeli regime.

The agreement is the latest step in the effort by the PA leadership to end the armed struggle that has been the centerpiece of the more than four-year Al Aqsa intifada (uprising) that began in the fall of 2000. The exhaustion of this struggle, in face of the Israeli government's assaults, encirclement, and devastating campaign of assassinations of leaders of armed resistance, has been reflected in the willingness to accept the PA-brokered truce shown by Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade—the largest Palestinian groups that participated in the armed struggle.

Abbas, in an interview published in the *New York Times* February 14, said while the armed intifada was not a "mistake," the cease-fire agreement signaled that it is over. "Any war will have an end. And what is the end? To sit around the table and talk," Abbas told the *Times*. Referring to the Palestinian armed groups he added, "they realize that this is the time to come to the table and talk and negotiate."

Following the summit, U.S. president George Bush praised Abbas's "commitment to fighting terror," and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced that Army Lt. Gen. William Ward would act as

security commander for the region. "Ward's responsibilities will include helping the Palestinians train and equip their security forces," CNN reported. The several different organizations that make up the Palestinian security forces were established in the 1990s with the cooperation of the Israeli secret police and the CIA. This step now places the Pentagon, not the CIA, in the central role in constructing a PA police apparatus that Washington hopes will work with the U.S. and Israeli governments to help contain Palestinian resistance.

Late last year Abbas made clear that Fatah, the leading group in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), intended to put a formal end to the armed struggle. In a December 14 interview with *Asharq al-Awsat* (The Middle East), Abbas said, "The use of weapons in the current intifada is damaging and must cease." On January 21, two weeks after he was elected PA president, Abbas deployed thousands of Palestinian police officers in towns across the northern border of Gaza to prevent armed attacks on Israeli towns by Palestinian forces.

This is another step in the "peace" process between Tel Aviv and the PLO that started with the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian Oslo accord. It is a product both of the inability of the Israeli regime to crush Palestinian resistance, and the increasingly bourgeois course of the Palestinian Authority leadership. The top leaders of the PLO have more and more turned their eyes away from the ranks of the fighting Palestinian people and relied first on the Arab regimes in the region and then on accommodation with Washington in the struggle for a Palestinian homeland.

Tel Aviv makes small concessions

Tel Aviv is aiming to use the negotiations to secure the long-term viability of the state of Israel and its largest settlements on the West Bank.

The main concession that the Israeli government is offering is the withdrawal of its 7,500 settlers and the thousands of Israeli troops that defend them from Gaza. Sharon, who has faced sharp protests against this from the right wing, scored a victory February 10 when a leader in the largest Gaza settlement said half of families there had signed a declaration agreeing to relocate to

Israel, according to the Associated Press.

The *Jerusalem Post* reported that Tel Aviv would pull out of the West Bank city of Jericho in mid-February, turning over security duties to Palestinian forces. At a later date would follow Bethlehem, Falkilya, Ramallah, and Tulkarm.

On February 13 the Israeli cabinet approved a list of 500 Palestinian prisoners to be released in the week ahead. All have already completed at least two-thirds of their sentences, and were not "violent offenders," said Israeli officials. Tel Aviv has agreed to release 900 of the 8,000 Palestinian prisoners it holds over the next three months and repatriate about 60 Palestinians it has expelled from the West Bank. Tel Aviv also opened the Erez crossing point from Gaza into Israel February 10. The Israeli regime had closed the gates over the course of the intifada, blocking the passage of more than 100,000 Palestinian workers who had traveled though it for work in Israel daily.

A key test of the "reliability" of Abbas in the eyes of the Israeli rulers is whether he can enforce the cease-fire on armed groups.

Two days after the Sharm el-Sheik summit, Hamas and other groups fired dozens of mortars and rockets at the Gush Katif Israeli settlements, *Haaretz* reported. The Israeli daily said there were no casualties. "The firing was self-defense against aggression," Hamas said in a statement, referring to the killing of two Palestinians by Israeli forces in the days before.

In response, Abbas fired three top security officials and other officers for failing to prevent the attack. Abbas also convened an emergency meeting of the Fatah central committee, which announced a "general alert and state of emergency among the Palestinian security services and the Fatah movement to deal with the severe security violations, the attempts to undermine the Palestinian Authority's deterrent capabilities, and the attempts to undermine its international commitments," reported *Haaretz*.

Although Tel Aviv called off a meeting with Palestinian officials in the wake of the attack, it took no military action. Israeli defense minister Shaul Mofaz told the media this had been a "test" for Abbas. "If the Palestinians won't fight terror, we will have to do it. But we still think there is a historic window of opportunity that we must not let slip," he said.

At the time of the Sharm el-Sheik summit, representatives of Hamas and other armed groups said they were not bound by the agreement made by Abbas. Instead they announced that they had "initiated calm," but would not "stand handcuffed" in the face of Israeli aggression.



Getty Images

Workers line up at the gates of the Erez checkpoint in Gaza February 10 to work in Israel. It was reopened that day for the first time in four years.

The Palestinian president held talks February 12 with Hamas officials to "inform them there is only one Palestinian Authority and one leadership," PA cabinet secretary Hassan Abu Libdeh told the Associated Press.

The *Christian Science Monitor* reported February 14 that Hamas will now also "refrain from immediate retaliation for Israeli army actions." It quoted a Hamas official as saying, "We pledge not to take the initiative in carrying out resistance operations. We will now be watching the Israeli behavior on the ground."

Tel Aviv, which only recently announced a suspension of its targeted assassinations of Hamas leaders, was not satisfied. "Hamas needs the quiet to arm itself to the teeth," Israeli foreign ministry spokesperson Gideon Meir told the *Monitor*. "The only way out of this situation is for (Abbas) to dismantle Hamas and all the infrastructure of terror."

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Farmers protest January 22, Thessaloniki, Greece.

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U.S. gov’t rejects talks with Tehran brokered by EU

BY CINDY JAQUITH

In response to increasing U.S. threats, including sanctions and the possibility of military strikes, the government of Iran declared it would not give up its nuclear program.

In his State of the Union address, President George Bush singled out Iran as “the world’s primary state sponsor of terror, pursuing nuclear weapons while depriving its people of the freedom they seek and deserve.”

Washington chose the resumption of Iran’s negotiations with the European Union over nuclear issues to schedule a European tour of newly appointed secretary of state Condoleezza Rice, during which she pointedly criticized the European governments for not pressing Tehran hard enough to end its nuclear program.

“We have believed all along that Iran ought to be referred to the [U.N.] Security Council and then a variety of steps are available to the international community,” Rice said in an interview with Fox News. “They need to hear that the discussions that they are in with the Europeans are not going to be a kind of way-station where they are allowed to continue their activities; that there’s going to be an end to this and that they are going to end up in the Security Council.”

According to Reuters, “U.N. sanctions could include a halt to peaceful nuclear cooperation, a ban on foreign investment, reduced diplomatic ties or travel curbs on Iranian leaders. Sanctions on Iran’s oil exports seem unlikely in view of the potential impact on world oil prices and the global economy.”

U.S. sanctions already bar U.S. companies from doing business with Iran. Reuters said, “U.S. giants such as Halliburton and General Electric Co., which have used subsidiaries to get round the embargo, have said they will do no new business in Iran. Britain’s oil major BP has also said U.S. pressure is keeping it out.”

The Iranian government agreed in November, after negotiations with the EU governments of Britain, Germany, and France, to temporarily suspend production of enriched uranium. Talks between the three imperialist powers and Iran on that country’s nuclear program resumed in February. According to Reuters, the European governments are offering Tehran a package of economic incentives in exchange for an end to Iran’s nuclear program.

“The international community has got to be certain to speak with one very tough voice to the Iranians that it is not going to be acceptable for Iran to build a nuclear weapon under cover of civilian nuclear power,” Rice said in the Fox interview.

Questioned about the possibility of a U.S. military strike to wipe out Iranian nuclear facilities, Rice said in London, “The question is simply not on the agenda at this point—we have diplomatic means to do this.”

U.S. drones over Iran

The *Washington Post* reported February 13 that Washington has been sending drone spy planes over Iranian territory for at least a year, in an effort to locate nuclear sites. “The small, pilotless planes, penetrating Iranian airspace from U.S. military facilities in Iraq, use radar, video, still photography and air filters designed to pick up traces of nuclear activity to gather information that is not accessible by satellites,” the *Post* reported. “The aerial espionage is standard in military preparations for an eventual air attack and is also employed as a tool for intimidation.”

French foreign minister Michel Barnier, speaking at a news conference with Rice in Paris, said the French government and the other European participants want to let diplomacy run its course. He said they “need the confidence and the support of the United States in this very delicate phase.” According to Agence France-Press, Barnier told Rice that U.S. help would be needed if the Europeans are to make good on the promised economic incentives, especially helping Iran join the World Trade Organi-

zation and to modernize Iran’s commercial airline fleet. Prior to her arrival in Europe, Rice said Washington would not aid Europe in offering incentives to Iran, the *New York Times* reported.

The German foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, indicated Berlin might support placing Iran’s nuclear program before the Security Council. “If Iran were to behave unreasonably, against its own interests, if it for example restarted (uranium) enrichment...then that would lead to the Security Council,” Fischer said according to Reuters.

Iran’s defense minister, Ali Shamkhani, accused the EU and Washington of cooperating to force Iran to compromise. “One side is playing a good cop role, while the other side is playing the bad cop in order to put Iran in the throes of the good cop from fear of the bad cop,” Shamkhani said.

Speaking at Friday prayers, February 11, in Tehran, Iran’s capital, former Iranian president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said, “It is not acceptable that developed countries generate 70 or 80 percent of their electricity from nuclear energy and tell Iran, a great and powerful nation, that it cannot have nuclear electricity. Iran does not accept this.”

“We will guard this technology. You will see in the future that Iran will have all the achievements of nuclear science at its disposal,” said Rafsanjani. “Iran has not hesitated for a moment about its decision to continue [uranium] enrichment.”

Iranian president Mohammad Khatami said a “burning hell” awaits any invader of Iran as he addressed thousands of demonstrators at a rally celebrating the 26th anniversary of the Iranian revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed shah in 1979.

Khatami said, “The Iranian nation does not seek war, does not seek violence and



U.S. soldier prepares an RQ-1 Predator, unmanned aircraft, for a mission. Washington has admitted using these drones, most likely launched from U.S. bases in Iraq, for its spy missions over Iranian airspace to map Iran’s antiaircraft defenses and other military installations.

dispute. But the world must know that this nation will not tolerate any invasion.... The whole Iranian nation is united against any threat or attack.”

A 68-year-old Iranian at the rally, Habibollah Hosseini, told Al-Jazeera, “The U.S. is after an excuse. If we stop atomic technology, they will find another excuse. They invaded Iraq although there were no weapons [of mass destruction]. The best response to intimidation is unity and power. We are here to show this,” he said.

Iran’s senior national security official, Hassan Rowhani, warned the United States that aerial or missile attacks couldn’t destroy Iran’s nuclear facilities. “Our nuclear centers cannot be destroyed. Our nuclear technology comes from our scientists (and) we can transfer our nuclear workshops under mountains and carry out enrichment where no bomb or missile can be effective,” Rowhani said, according to Al-Jazeera.

Iranian ambassador to Cuba Ahmad Edrisian held a news conference in Havana on the occasion of the Iranian revolution’s anniversary. According to the Cuban daily *Granma*, Edrisian said, “the United States

government will make a big mistake in attacking his country. It will be caught between gunfire and the fury of the Iranian people.”

Granma reported that the ambassador said “even before the Islamic Revolution, a nuclear plant was being developed in the south of the country with the participation of U.S. and German specialists, based on a study of the country’s electrical energy needs. It’s the logical right of the Iranian people to take advantage of nuclear energy and its peaceful uses, as has occurred in other countries.”

The Cuban government was one of the first to establish diplomatic relations with Iran after the 1979 revolution.

The government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, which recently declared it has nuclear weapons and defended its sovereign right to possess them, saluted the Iranian revolution’s anniversary, stating on the government’s Central Broadcasting Station, “Iran has walked a way of anti-imperialism and independence since it brought down the U.S.-friendly despotic regime on Feb. 11, 1979.”

U.S. Army undergoes ‘most significant change since 1939’

BY SAM MANUEL

“This is the most significant change of your Army since 1939,” Gen. Richard Cody, deputy to Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker, told the U.S. House Armed Services Committee February 2.

Cody was referring to the restructuring of the U.S. armed forces as part of Washington’s accelerated preparations to enter the imperialist war in Europe and go to war with Japan. Between 1939 and December 1941, when the Roosevelt administration declared war on Tokyo simultaneous with Germany’s declaration of war against the United States, the size of the U.S. Army was increased from 125,000 to 1.64 million. During the war itself, the figure soared to 8.3 million. At the same time, the U.S. Navy ordered a major expansion of ship construction and established the first Atlantic patrol, while the numbers of sailors and officers jumped tenfold to 3 million. And the Army Air Corps, later the Air Force, began a similar enlargement.

Cody’s speech, titled “On Adequacy of the Army Forces,” focused on a number of aspects of a historic shift in the global deployment of Washington’s armed forces, its military strategy, and its order of battle—what the Pentagon refers to as the “transformation” of the U.S. military. Championed by the White House and pushed forward by the Department of Defense, this transformation aims at preparing for the character of wars the U.S. imperialist rulers are fighting and know they need to fight under the banner of “antiterrorism.”

Underscoring the changing character, geographic scope, and accelerated frequency of U.S. imperialism’s military operations during the last three administrations, Cody pointed out: “From 1950 to 1989 the size of the total Army ranged from 64 Divisions during the Korean War, to 40 Divisions during the Vietnam War, to 28 (18 Active Component and 10 National Guard) Divisions when the Cold War ended. During this 39-year period, the Army participated

in 10 distinct operations including those in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and Grenada.... In the 14 years since the end of the Cold War (1989 to 2003), the size of the total Army further decreased from 28 Divisions to 18 Divisions; however, the operating tempo increased dramatically as the Army answered this nation’s call in 57 distinct operations...including Panama, Desert Storm, Somalia, Haiti, Macedonia, Bosnia, and Kosovo, as well as commitments in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines, the Horn of Africa, and many other locations.”

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, “the largest and longest operations in which the Army has participated since the Vietnam War,” Cody said, have required accelerating the transformation of the military’s organizational structure away from the heavy-division, and heavy-armor based forces designed to confront similarly organized and equipped forces of the Soviet Union.

The goal of the transformation is a lighter, more mobile, and flexible brigade-based military that is better suited to fight the kinds of wars U.S. imperialism decides to pursue abroad as well as at home. Cody said the U.S. military would get its first look at how units organized along these lines perform as new deployments arrive in Iraq in the next troop rotation.

Refitting to fight ‘war on terror’

In addition to the operations abroad, soldiers are “supporting Homeland Security and providing Military Support to Civil Authorities for many different missions within the United States,” Cody told the Congressional committee. This is part of the Army’s changing deployment—or “footprint” in military jargon—which now also includes the United States.

According to the general, the U.S. Army has over 1 million soldiers today. To meet potential operational needs, just over half of these forces, or 650,000 troops, are on active duty. Some 300,000 soldiers are

deployed in 120 countries.

Cody gave an example of how the old organizational structure of the Army places some specialized units at risk under combat conditions today. There is a force imbalance involving combat-support and combat-service-support units, 60 percent of which are now in the Guard and Reserve, he said. “In the past,” he noted, “our doctrine called for these units to operate in ‘rear areas’ where threats were historically minimal. This doctrine led to a resource strategy in some cases where combat-support or combat-service-support units would have less modern equipment in fewer quantities so that the combat formations could have full amounts of the latest technology.” This is now changing.

“Before 9/11, the Army was already on a course to realize its transformation, but at a very deliberate pace and in a much more constrained resource environment,” Cody said. “Clearly, the War on Terrorism accentuated the Army’s need to transform.”

Since 9/11, the Army has spent billions equipping all units with the newest technology and shedding weapons programs aimed at fighting conventional wars. One of the best examples of this change, Cody said, “can be found in our cancellation of the Comanche helicopter program and the Crusader artillery system,” which were aimed at fighting battles envisioned during the Cold War. Funds saved from these cuts, the general continued, have been diverted to the current fleet of helicopters, such as those being used in Iraq now, and “missile avoidance systems and upgraded avionics.”

These changes were fueled by “the unpredictable nature of the Iraqi insurgency,” Cody pointed out. Irregular units fighting the U.S. occupation forces with shoulder-fired missiles and other such arms have brought down a number of U.S. Army helicopters in the last two years.

“Army transformation has four primary

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Iraqi vote results show new gov’t will be unstable

BY SAM MANUEL

The final results of the January 30 elections in Iraq underscore the instability of the new government. The Shiite-based United Iraqi Alliance won 48 percent of the vote—well short of the two-thirds majority it would need to choose the new government on its own. It will now have to bargain, most likely with the slate of Kurdish parties, in order to form a coalition government.

The slate headed by the main Kurdish parties won the second-largest bloc of votes, putting them in a stronger position to press for greater autonomy in the northeastern part of the country, known as Iraqi Kurdistan. They also won a majority in local elections in Ta’min province, which includes the oil-rich city of Kirkuk. There is widespread support among Kurds to incorporate the city into the Kurdish autonomous region.

The new government also faces the challenge of how to entice Sunni-based parties that boycotted the elections to participate in the new government, and in what form. Wealthy layers among the Sunni minority were the backbone of support for the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein. Sections of them are also reportedly behind the financing, organizing, and supplying of Baathist-led groups that have been responsible for numerous suicide bombings, kidnappings, and beheadings of hostages.

Iraqi election officials said the 48 percent of the vote won by the United Iraqi Alliance should translate into about 140 of the 275 seats in the national assembly, according to the February 14 *New York Times*. The slate headed by Iyad Allawi, prime minister of the U.S.-appointed interim government—a wealthy Shiite and former Baathist—received less than 14 percent of the votes, and should receive 40 seats. The slate backed by Muqtada al-Sadr, whose militia fought fierce battles with U.S. troops last year, is projected to get three seats.

Two seats will go to the Iraqi Communist Party, which held posts in the Governing Council and the interim government. Both of these bodies were appointed under the U.S. occupation.

Voter turnout was high among Shiites, reaching up to 75 percent in the southern

provinces. Shiites make up 65 percent of the population. They and the Kurds were brutally repressed by Hussein regime.

Explosive result in Kirkuk

The Kurdistan Alliance received 26 percent of the vote. That slate, headed by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), is projected to receive around 75 seats, according to the *Times*. Voting in Iraqi Kurdistan was even higher than among Shiites in the south, averaging 85 percent. Kurds make up 20 percent of Iraq’s population.

The Kurdistan Brotherhood list, backed by the same parties, won 58.4 percent of the vote in the provincial ballot held simultaneously in Ta’min, reported Agence France-Presse. The slate reportedly received 1.5 million of the 1.75 million votes cast in the predominantly Kurdish provinces in northeastern Iraq. The Ta’min province includes Kirkuk, which the *Financial Times* reports has oil reserves estimated at more than 8 billion barrels and is Iraq’s second-largest oilfield.

About 100,000 Kurds, whose families had been brutally driven from the province by the Hussein regime’s “Arabization” scheme, were allowed to vote in Kirkuk. Thousands of Kurds, Turkomans, and Assyrians were forcibly removed from the province, particularly since the 1970s under Baath party rule. Their lands and homes were given to Sunni Arabs, many of whom were in turn forced to move to the area to strengthen the regime’s hold over the strategic region. The largest numbers of Kurds were displaced during the armed conflict and genocidal Anfal campaign of 1988 under the Hussein regime.

Turkey’s foreign minister, Abdullah Gul, threatened that Ankara might “take action” if the Kurds attempt to take control of Kirkuk, according to a February 1 Al-Jazeera TV broadcast. Kurds inhabit a territory that stretches across northern Iraq, southern Turkey and parts of Iran and Syria. This area is viewed by many Kurds as historic Kurdistan. The governments of these countries fear any move toward Kurdish autonomy in Iraq as potentially inciting national aspirations



Getty Images/Chris Hondros

Man in Kirkuk, northern Iraq, carries cinderblocks for construction February 13. In background are tents where Kurds reside until they finish building homes. Such construction is booming in the city, which Kurds hope to include in autonomous region.

among their Kurdish populations. Washington has assured Ankara that it opposes Kurdish independence.

Sunnis make overtures

A slate headed by interim government president Ghazi al-Yawar is said to have won enough votes to receive five assembly seats. Al-Yawar and Adnan Pachachi, whom it appears will win no seats, were among a handful of prominent wealthy Sunnis who participated in the elections.

The largest Sunni organizations—the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) and the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS)—called for a boycott of the elections. But leaders of the IIP have made overtures of cooperation following the outcome of the vote. “Our view is that the election was a step towards democracy and ending the occupation,” said Ayah al-Samaray, an assistant to the IIP general secretary, according to a dispatch in the London-based *Guardian*. He called the boycott

a “blunder,” the report said. Mishan Jobouri, another prominent Sunni politician, said the clerics were “responsible for the catastrophic results,” the *Washington Post* reported.

The IIP was suppressed by the Baathist but participated in the U.S.-appointed Governing Council, an advisory body to the U.S. occupation regime headed by proconsul Paul Bremer. It quit the interim government in protest of the U.S. military assault against Baathist strongholds in Fal-lujah last November.

A meeting at the AMS headquarters stipulated setting a deadline for U.S. troops to leave Iraq as a condition for its participation in drafting a new constitution. Al-Jazeera said the meeting also included an Arab nationalist, a former member of the Hussein regime, and representative of Muqtada al-Sadr.

The AMS was formed in Iraq shortly after the overthrow of Hussein’s regime by the U.S. military.

U.S. military transformation

Continued from Page 3

goals,” Cody said.

The first is “restructuring from a division-based to a brigade-based force. These brigades are designed as *modules*, or self-sufficient and standardized brigade combat teams, that can be more readily deployed and combined with other Army and joint forces to meet the precise needs of Combatant Commanders.”

The 33 existing U.S. Army brigades are being restructured into about 45 faster, more mobile, more lethal, light-armored brigades called Brigade Combat Teams, or Units of Action. The announced goal is to be able by 2010 to put a combat-ready brigade into action anywhere in the world within 96 hours, a full division within 120 hours, and five divisions (some 75,000 troops) within 30 days. Substantial powers of command are being devolved from the division to the brigade level, including joint command, as needed, across all four branches—Army, Marines, Navy, and Air Force.

The percentage of the Army involved in ongoing military operations will increase substantially with regular troop rotation and integration of units from the Army Reserve and the National Guard in deployments abroad, Cody said.

“This program, which we call modularity, will increase the combat power of the Active Component by 30 percent as well as the size of the Army’s overall pool of available forces by over 50 percent,” he told the House committee. “The total number of combat brigades will increase with 10 active brigades (three-and-a-third divisions in our old terms) being added by the end of 2006.”

One of the criticisms by liberal opponents of the Bush administration’s conduct of the war in Iraq is that the defense department has deployed too few troops in Iraq and has created a “backdoor” draft by extending tours of duty.

Reserve soldiers make up 48 percent of Army troops deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq, Cody said. Army Reserve soldiers provide “warfighter critical transportation, maintenance, and supply elements,”

he added. The military’s aim is to reduce this portion to 36 percent, which is related to the next goal of the Army’s transformation.

“Second, we are rebalancing our active and reserve forces to produce more units with the skills in highest demand,” Cody said. “Even before the War on Terror, the imbalance caused us to reach too deep and frequently into the Reserve Component to support our National Security Strategy. The Army has already changed over 40,000 of over 100,000 soldier positions identified to appropriately balance capabilities in the Active and Reserve Components. The realignment will produce a 50 percent increase in infantry capabilities, with similar increases in military police, civil affairs, intelligence, and other critical skills.”

“Third,” Cody continued, “the Army is stabilizing soldiers within units for longer periods to increase combat readiness, cohesion, reduce turnover, and eliminate many repetitive training requirements.” Soldiers would arrive and train together at their initial base for roughly three years. “With fewer soldiers and families moving,” said Cody, “more soldiers will be available on any given day to train or to fight while improving quality of life for our soldiers and their families by increasing the predictability of deployments and other requirements.”

Finally, the general said, “We are divesting functions no longer relevant and reengineering business processes to increase responsiveness to the Combatant Commanders.”

Washington’s ongoing military operations are indispensable to implementing these changes, Cody concluded, and the military’s transformation is being carried out smoothly while the U.S. armed forces are fighting abroad. “A year ago we conducted the largest movement of your Army since World War II, moving eight and a half divisions in and out of combat,” he told the Congressional committee. “That movement barely made the papers, and we are doing it again today.”

Campaign to expand long-term readership of ‘Militant’ begins

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Subscription Renewal Campaign February 5 – March 6: Week One					
Country	Militant			PM	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold
SWEDEN	4	1	25%	1	0
CANADA					
Montreal	6	1	17%	2	0
Toronto	10	1	10%	0	0
CANADA total	16	2	13%	2	0
UNITED STATES					
Philadelphia	10	3	30%	1	0
Newark	10	3	30%	2	0
Cleveland	8	2	25%	3	1
Miami	12	3	25%	3	0
NE Pennsylvania	8	2	25%	5	0
Tampa	6	1	17%	3	1
New York	30	5	17%	8	0
Chicago	15	2	13%	5	0
Boston	15	2	13%	5	0
Price, UT	8	1	13%	6	1
Seattle	8	1	13%	3	0
Detroit	8	1	13%	2	0
Birmingham	10	1	10%	2	0
Twin Cities	15	1	7%	6	0
San Francisco	18	1	6%	7	0
Los Angeles	20	1	5%	10	0
Atlanta	15	0	0%	3	0
Craig, CO	10	0	0%	2	0
Des Moines	10	0	0%	5	1
Houston	15	0	0%	3	0
Omaha	5	0	0%	4	0
Pittsburgh	10	0	0%	1	0
Washington	14	0	0%	3	0
U.S. total	280	30	11%	92	4
UNITED KINGDOM					
Edinburgh	3	0	0%	0	0
London	10	1	10%	0	0
UK total	13	1	8%	0	0
AUSTRALIA	10	0	0%	2	0
ICELAND	2	0	0%	0	0
NEW ZEALAND					
Auckland	7	0	0%	0	0
Christchurch	3	0	0%	0	0
N.Z. total	10	0	0%	0	0
Int'l totals	335	34	10%	97	4
Goal/Should be	325	81	25%	80	20

BY DOUG NELSON

The international campaign to expand the long-term readership of the *Militant* and its Spanish-language sister publication *Perspectiva Mundial* began February 5. Partisans of the socialist publications have set an international goal of collecting 325 subscription renewals for the *Militant* and 80 for *PM* in the course of the four-week campaign, which ends March 6.

At the end of the first week, 34 *Militant* subscription renewals and four for *Perspectiva Mundial* have been collected. This is considerably short of the pace of 80 *Militant* and 20 *PM* renewals needed each week to make the goal.

Distributors of the socialist press will have to redouble their efforts to meet the challenge over the next three weeks. A weekly rhythm of contacting subscribers to renew their expired—or soon-to-expire—subscriptions will be needed to make the campaign a success. House visits are often useful to further political discussion and collect money for subscription renewals. These visits can also be a way to distribute socialist books and pamphlets by Pathfinder Press and other literature.

Socialist workers in factories, mines, and mills are encouraged to set goals for renewals from co-workers. Those participating in the campaign should send in reports and anecdotes to the *Militant* to keep readers informed of the campaign’s progress over the next few weeks.

‘We are heirs of the world’s revolutions’

Talk by Pathfinder Press president at Havana launching of pamphlet by Thomas Sankara

Below is the talk Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, gave February 10 at the Havana International Book Fair during the launching of the Spanish-language translation of *We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions* by Thomas Sankara. At the meeting, Waters, who is also editor of the *New International* magazine, presented issue no. 13 of the Marxist journal. (See article on page 6.)

On behalf of Pathfinder Press, a thank you to everyone who is with us here today to participate in this presentation. Above all, a special note of appreciation to compañero Ulises [Estrada], compañero [Manuel] Agramonte, and compañero [Armando] Hart.

We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions by Thomas Sankara, the leader of Burkina Faso’s popular revolutionary government from 1983 to 1987, was published by Pathfinder Press in French and then English some three years ago. The publication of *Somos herederos de las revoluciones del mundo* means that now, for the first time ever, some of Sankara’s most important speeches are also available in Spanish. It is a powerful new weapon in the hands of those fighting to advance along the road first charted in the *Communist Manifesto* more than 150 years ago by Marx and Engels and their comrades.

The imperialist rulers are miniaturizing

Sankara knew such conditions are not “natural” phenomena, but the products of today’s imperialist world order.

Revolutionary capacities

That world order, Sankara explained, can be fought, and must be destroyed. What marked him above all was his confidence in the revolutionary capacities of ordinary human beings to accomplish this. Like Fidel and Che, Sankara believed in the men and women so arrogantly dismissed by the rulers of the imperialist world. He did not think that man is “an incorrigible little animal, capable of advancing only if you feed him grass or tempt him with a carrot or whip him with a stick.” As Fidel so memorably said of Che, Sankara knew that anyone who thinks like that “will never be a revolutionary, never be a socialist, never be a communist.”

Sankara believed that a world built on different economic and social foundations can be created not by “technocrats,” “wise men,” or “politicians,” but by the masses of workers and peasants whose labor, joined with the riches of nature, is the source of all wealth. By ordinary human beings who transform themselves as they become an active, conscious force, transforming their conditions of life. And the revolutionary government he headed set out along this course, mobilizing peasants, workers, craftsmen, women, youth, the elderly, to carry out a literacy campaign, an immunization drive, to sink wells, plant trees, build housing, and begin to eliminate the oppressive class relations on the land.

Sankara stood out among the leaders of the struggles for national liberation in Africa in the last half of the twentieth century because he was a communist. Unlike so many others, he did not reject Marxism as a set of “European ideas,” alien to the class struggle in Africa. He understood that Marxism is precisely *not* “a set of ideas,” but the generalization of the lessons of the struggles of the working class on the road to its emancipation the world over, enriched by every battle. And he drew from those

lessons to the best of his abilities.

Speaking before the United Nations in 1984, he linked the freedom struggle of the people of Burkina Faso to the centuries of revolutionary struggle from the birth of capitalism to today—from the American and French revolutions at the end of the eighteenth century to the great October Revolution of 1917 that “transformed the world, brought victory to the proletariat, shook the foundation of capitalism, and made possible the realization of the Paris Commune’s dreams of justice.” We are the heirs of those revolutions, he said—hence the title.

“We are open to all the winds of the will of the peoples and their revolutions, and we study some of the terrible failures that have given rise to tragic violations of human rights,” he noted. “We take from each revolution only its kernel of purity, which forbids us to become slaves to the reality of others.”

And along that line of march, Sankara looked to Cuba as the preeminent example of revolutionary struggle in our times.

A world leader

Sankara was not only a leader of the people of Africa. He was not only a spokesman for the oppressed and exploited of the semi-colonial countries. He gave leadership to working people in the imperialist world as well. In the last decades of the 20th century, proletarian leaders with the world stature of Thomas Sankara, Maurice Bishop, and in a similar way Malcolm X in the United States, have emerged from the ranks of the oppressed peoples of all lands—even the



Margaret A. Novicki/Africa Report

Thomas Sankara, left, greets crowd in Orodara, Burkina Faso, in 1986. At right, women in Kaona, Burkina Faso, terrace soil to control erosion, April 1986.



UN Photo

most economically undeveloped—to give leadership to the international struggle for national liberation and socialism. And thus to take their rightful place in history, in leading historical change.

That fact is a measure of the vast changes that have marked the past century—the strengthening of revolutionary forces worldwide foreseen by Lenin and the leaders of the Communist International in the first years after the victory of the October Revolution.

This is the tradition in which we can today place the example given us by our five Cuban brothers who continue to fight not as victims, but as combatants of the Cuban Revolution, today on the front lines of the class struggle in the United States. From within the federal prisons, they are carrying out their political work among some 2 million others who are the recipients of what Washington calls justice. That is where we see the original of the face that the whole world has witnessed so clearly at Guantánamo Bay Naval Base and in Iraq.

A powerful, unique impact

The books produced by Pathfinder are not sold only in bookstores or through the worldwide web. Most are sold on the streets—from sidewalk tables in working-class districts of the cities and towns of the United States and Europe, at mine portals and factory gates, on university campuses and at high school doors, at demonstrations or meetings where those who are fighting and seeking a way forward for working people are likely to gather.

At those tables, the face of Thomas Sankara has a powerful, indeed unique impact. Many passing by are literally stopped in their tracks when their eye falls on the book *Thomas Sankara Speaks*. It is an expanded selection of his speeches that Pathfinder

published in English very soon after he was assassinated in 1987 and has maintained in print ever since. Some do not know who he is. But they are attracted to the confidence, character, and integrity they see in his face, and want to know more about him.

It is among the growing tens of thousands of immigrant workers from West and Central Africa who today are swelling the ranks of the working class in the imperialist centers, driven there by the whiplash of capital, that Sankara is best known and respected. Many are astonished to see the face of Sankara on a street table in the neighborhood where they live or work, on the cover of a book of his speeches, edited, printed, and distributed in the United States by working people there who look to Sankara as a revolutionary leader. That fact alone leads a good number to begin to think about the working class in the United States in a different way, and to be open to seeing the importance of the traditions of struggle they bring into what is the growing resistance by working people in North America to the bosses’ assaults on our wages, job conditions, hours of work, and basic social and political rights.

And it is important to add that the converse is equally true. Reading Sankara is for us an important part of broadening the historical and cultural horizons of those who have been born or lived for years in the imperialist centers.

Since it first appeared in 1988, close to 7,000 copies of *Thomas Sankara Speaks* have been sold in English alone, and many thousands more of the French edition, *Oser inventer l’avenir*—dare to invent the future.

From the very beginning, one of the hallmarks of the revolutionary course Sankara fought for was the mobilization

Continued on Page 11



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

February 10 celebration of the Spanish-language translation of *We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions* by Thomas Sankara, at Havana book fair. Speakers platform, from left: Manuel Agramonte, former Cuban ambassador to Burkina Faso; Ulises Estrada, director of *Tricontinental*; Armando Hart, president, José Martí Cultural Society; Mary-Alice Waters (speaking).

powerful weapons. As you can see here, so can we!

In October 1984, adopting a practice employed so effectively by Fidel [Castro] and Che [Guevara] before him, Thomas Sankara used the platform of the United Nations General Assembly to speak for and on behalf of the oppressed and exploited of the world. “I am here to bring you fraternal greetings from a country...whose seven million children, women, and men refuse henceforth to die from ignorance, hunger, and thirst,” Sankara told the assembled delegates of 159 nations.

“I make no claim to set forth doctrines here. I am neither messiah nor prophet. I possess no truths. My goal is...to speak on behalf of my people...to speak for the great, disinherited people of the earth so disparagingly named the Third World. I wish to explain the reasons for our revolt, even though I may not succeed in making you understand them.”

Sankara voiced the determination and dignity of the people of one of the poorest countries of imperialist-ravaged Africa—one that then had the highest infant mortality rate in the world, an illiteracy rate approaching 98 percent, and an average life expectancy of 40 years. He reached out to, and spoke on behalf of, all those the world over who refuse to accept the economic bondage of class society and its consequences, including ecological devastation, social disintegration, racism, and the wars of conquest and plunder inevitably and lawfully wrought by the workings of capitalism itself.

Now Available! ‘New International’ no. 13

OUR POLITICS START WITH THE WORLD by Jack Barnes

The huge economic and cultural inequalities between imperialist and semicolonial countries, and among classes within almost every country, are produced, reproduced, and accentuated by the workings of capitalism. For vanguard workers to build parties able to lead a successful revolutionary struggle for power in our own countries, says Barnes, our activity must be guided by a strategy to close this gap.

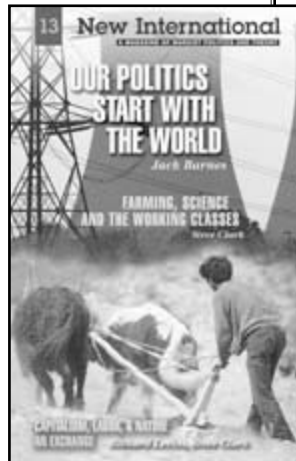
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Sankara book launching

Continued from front page
tion struggles over the years. Also present was Freddy Ilunga, a Congolese liberation fighter who in 1965 served as a Swahili interpreter for Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara, while Guevara was there leading the column of Cuban combatants. Among the participants were also nearly a dozen university students, including four from West Africa who are studying in Cuba from Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, and Guinea-Bissau.

In his opening remarks Estrada highlighted Sankara's leadership capacities, both the clarity of his revolutionary perspectives and his integrity and example for the exploited and oppressed worldwide.

In the speeches appearing in the pamphlet, Estrada said, Sankara addressed the Burkinabè people in order to mobilize them to "build a new, independent society, free from social injustice and centuries of domination and exploitation by international imperialism."

In 1983 Sankara, a 33-year-old army captain, led a movement that brought to power a popular revolutionary government in what was then Upper Volta, a former French colony. One year later, the country was renamed Burkina Faso, "The Land of Upright Men." Sankara was assassinated in a 1987 military coup that destroyed the revolutionary government.

Estrada explained that the government led by Sankara sought to mobilize the population in Burkina Faso, one of the poorest countries of the world, to combat the encroachment of the Sahara desert, including through the planting of trees and drilling wells. It launched immunization and literacy campaigns, and abolished compulsory labor and other oppressive social relations in the countryside.

He cited several speeches contained in the pamphlet, including Sankara's tribute to Che Guevara at an Oct. 8, 1987, rally, explaining the importance of Guevara's revolutionary perspective and example.

Referring to Sankara's assassination on Oct. 15, 1987, Estrada said he was "convinced that the hand of his assassins was guided by imperialism, which could not allow a man with the ideas and actions of Sankara to lead a country on a continent so exploited for hundreds of years by international imperialism, colonialism, and neocolonial governments that do their bidding."

"Sankara's political ideas will endure," he said, "like those of Patrice Lumumba and Amílcar Cabral, also assassinated by traitors at the behest of the empire." The latter two were leaders of national liberation struggles—Lumumba in the Congo and Cabral in Guinea-Bissau.

Urging those present to read and study Sankara's speeches, Estrada concluded by saying that some day the peoples of Africa will realize "the dreams of Agostinho Neto, Sékou Touré, Julius Nyerere, Gamal Abdel Nasser, and so many others who left an indelible mark on history." He was referring to leaders of the anticolonial struggles in

Angola, Guinea-Conakry, Tanzania, and Egypt, respectively.

Imperialism can and must be fought

Waters noted that with the new Spanish-language translation of *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions*, the Pathfinder booklet, first issued in French and then in English, is now available in three languages. Pathfinder has also published *Thomas Sankara Speaks*, an expanded English-language selection of his speeches; *Oser inventer l'avenir*, an expanded collection in French; and *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle*, a pamphlet containing a March 1987 speech by Sankara—available in French, English, and Spanish. A publisher in Iran has also produced a translation in Farsi. Pathfinder presented the pamphlet on the struggle for women's liberation at the Havana book fair in 2002.

Sankara, Waters said, "reached out to, and spoke on behalf of, all those the world over who refuse to accept the economic bondage of class society and its consequences." He knew that "such conditions are not 'natural phenomena' but the products of today's imperialist world order. He knew that order can be fought and must be destroyed."

She emphasized that "what marked Sankara above all was his confidence in the revolutionary capacities of ordinary human beings to accomplish this." He stood out among the leaders of the struggles for national liberation in Africa "because he was



Militant/Jonathan Silberman
Audience at launching of Spanish-language translation of *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions* at the Havana International Book Fair. On right side of aisle, with black jacket and white pants, is Freddy Ilunga, Swahili translator for Ernesto Che Guevara during 1965 Congo mission. Gen. Gustavo Chui Beltrán, who headed leadership delegation from Combatants Association, is at far right in checkered shirt.

across the African continent. That talk, she pointed out, is cited extensively in the newly published issue no. 7 of the Marxist magazine *Nueva Internacional*, which was also introduced at the February 10 book launching. "Our Politics Start with the World" by Jack Barnes and other articles in that issue

deference Mitterrand considered his due, especially in a former colony. Sankara's speech at the reception "made Mitterrand extremely uncomfortable," Agramonte said. He reported he had just given Pathfinder a videotape of that meeting, so that it can finally be published. At the time, he said, none of the French press would report on it.

Armando Hart, who as Cuban minister of culture in 1984 had presented Sankara with the José Martí Order, was the final speaker at the book presentation. He applauded Pathfinder for publishing this collection of speeches by Sankara. "It is a tribute to Sankara, but also to what this outstanding son of Africa represents in history in the 20th century," he said.

Cuba and Africa: links in struggle

Hart highlighted the historic "links that tie Cuba to the peoples of Africa." While many leaders of Cuba's independence struggle in the 19th century were from the propertied classes, he said, the ranks of the liberation fighters were from the exploited layers of the population, many of them Black. Cuba's revolutionary history and culture has been marked by the role of these combatants of African origin, "who have not received sufficient recognition," Hart said, pointing to Antonio Maceo, a commander of the liberation forces, as a symbol of their sacrifice and contributions.

Hart stressed the place of Sankara in the history of ideas. "I think the future of ideas in the world lies in Africa, Latin America, and the United States," he said.

"Until today, the cultural history of the world has been presented through a European schema," Hart added. "I very much respect European culture, but the time has come to go beyond that narrow mold. Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean hold a place of enormous importance in that history."

The world is passing through a moment in history, Hart said, where he wondered how many really saw themselves as "heirs of the world's revolutions," adding that "those who can say this are in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and potentially in the United States."

He concluded by saying he was "grateful that I was invited to join in this tribute to a man I knew, admired, and continue to admire, one of the most outstanding symbols of the revolution that we need."

At the end of the meeting, members of the audience crowded around the sales table to purchase copies of *Somos herederos de las revoluciones del mundo* and the issue of the magazine *Nueva Internacional*.

Throughout the book fair, these two titles were a focus of attention by visitors to the Pathfinder stand. Many were drawn to the large blow-up of the cover of the book, prominently displayed at the stand. Often they had heard about Sankara but did not know much about his political perspective and were interested to learn more about him. At the meeting and over the course of the book fair, a total of 133 copies of *Somos herederos de las revoluciones del mundo* and 101 copies of *Nueva Internacional* no. 7 were sold or distributed as complimentary copies to libraries, organizations, and others.



Militant photos by Jonathan Silberman
Participants at February 10 launching of newly published Spanish-language translation of pamphlet by Sankara buy booklet after program ended (left). Speeches by West African revolutionary leader were popular at the Pathfinder Press booth (above) at the Havana International Book Fair.

a communist." He did not reject Marxism as something European, alien to the class struggle in Africa. Sankara, she said, gave leadership not only to the people of Africa and the rest of the semicolonial world but "to working people in the imperialist world as well."

Waters also called attention to a 1986 speech by Sankara exposing imperialism's destruction of fields, forests, soil, and waters

deal with the same political questions and course that Sankara fought to advance (see full text of remarks by Waters on page 5).

Agramonte spent many years in Africa, both as a revolutionary combatant in Congo-Brazzaville in 1965 and as Cuban ambassador in several countries over more than three decades. He gave a lively description of Sankara's qualities as a political leader, drawing on his own experience as Cuba's first ambassador to Burkina Faso.

Sankara's visit to Cuba

Agramonte told the story of how he accompanied the Burkinabè president on a 1984 trip to Cuba, where Sankara received the José Martí Order, the highest honor issued by the Cuban government to non-Cuban leaders. During the plane ride Sankara insisted on preparing his acceptance speech in Spanish, a language in which he was not fluent.

When Agramonte tried to dissuade him, Sankara answered, "Translators are traitors. I want to convey my message directly to the Cuban people and to that revolution that I love and admire so much." Sankara worked meticulously with Agramonte to correct some points of grammar and pronunciation, as well as facts about Martí, and then delivered his speech in Spanish to everyone's surprise and appreciation.

Agramonte also recounted a formal reception in 1986 when French president François Mitterrand paid a state visit to Burkina Faso. Sankara refused to treat the head of the French imperialist state with the

Now available in Spanish! *Somos herederos de las revoluciones del mundo* (We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions) by Thomas Sankara

Thomas Sankara led the 1983–1987 revolution in Burkina Faso. In the five speeches contained in this pamphlet, he explains how the peasants and workers of this West African country established a popular revolutionary government and began to fight the hunger, illiteracy, and economic backwardness imposed by imperialist domination, and the oppression of women inherited from millennia of class society. In so doing, they have provided an example not only to the workers and small farmers of Africa, but to those of the entire world.

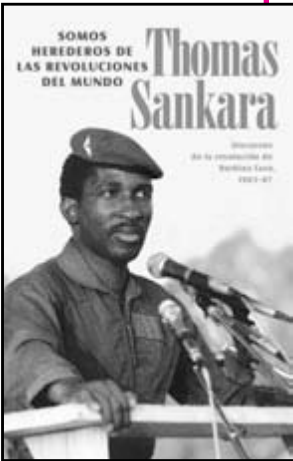
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Utah miners fight for union

Continued from front page

the miners to attend the conference, set up an information table, and raise funds for their struggle, workers said. Previous District 11 meetings have passed resolutions and raised funds in support of the miners.

Labor board ruling

The January 31 NLRB ruling states, “The 108 challenged ballots of the individuals named [Kingston-family members]...are resolved on the basis that these challenged ballots shall not be opened and counted.” The NLRB in Denver will count only the seven ballots that were not challenged by either the UMWA or the company on the day of the election, unless one of the parties involved objects to it. The labor board has yet to rule on the company’s challenge to 27 ballots cast by Co-Op miners fired in the weeks leading up to the union vote.

In a February 9 press release, UMWA international president Cecil Roberts said, “The UMWA is pleased that the national NLRB has indicated its agreement with the Denver NLRB decision by rejecting C.W. Mining’s appeal. It is clear that including the votes of the Kingston family members would have stacked the deck heavily against the workers who risked a lot to finally be able to exercise their right to vote for union representation. This is a first step in winning the battle for the Co-Op miners, but there is much more to do.

“In November, 2004, the regional NLRB office in Denver ruled that the defined bargaining unit at the mine could not include Kingston family members because of their ties to mine management,” said the UMWA press release. “Both C.W. Mining and the company union, the IAUWU, challenged that decision, appealing it to the full NLRB in Washington. In December, 2004, a representation election was held at the mine, and Kingston family members voted in the election—though all their ballots were challenged and not co-mingled. Everyone’s votes were then impounded, pending a decision by the full NLRB....

“The Co-Op miners have shown tremendous courage throughout this struggle, and they can be proud of what they have achieved so far,” said Roberts. “The UMWA will continue to help them try to obtain the true union representation they desire. These workers were—by the UMWA’s opinion—unjustly fired because they wanted to join the UMWA. It was blatant retaliation—and I said that at the time. The law says these workers have a right to belong to a union just like anyone else who works in America. It also says it is illegal to fire them for wanting to exercise that right. We intend to see their rights are upheld.”

More than 30 pro-UMWA miners were fired by mine management on December 9, one week before the election, supposedly for not having proper work documents. According to an NLRB decision issued in June 2004, which ordered C.W. Mining to take back miners who had been locked out for 10 months, the company was barred from threatening miners with discharge for union activity, or using threats related to their immigration status, to intimidate miners who were for the union. Many of the miners who have been in the forefront of the union-organizing effort at Co-Op are foreign-born. The company also fired other workers before and after the union election on made-up charges of “disciplinary reasons” or “low work performance,” the miners say.

The mostly Mexican-born miners who worked at Co-Op have waged a fight since September 2003, when the bosses fired 75 workers who wanted UMWA representation at the mine to improve working conditions, secure decent wages, and work with dignity on the job. Most miners make between \$5.50 and \$7 an hour at Co-Op, with no health insurance to speak of. The wages of most workers at coal mines in this area average \$20 an hour, miners report.

March 12 solidarity rally

Co-Op miners said they are working to organize a March 12 solidarity rally in Price to draw their supporters into the next stage of this fight. Many workers in

this area and around the country who have backed the Co-Op miners want to know where the struggle stands, and how they can help. The miners say the March 12 event will be an opportunity to address those questions, and raise much-needed funds to sustain the 22 miners and their families who are still without work since the mass firings of union supporters in early December.

The miners have made up special invitations to all those who have written letters of support and made financial contributions to their struggle. Prizes donated by backers of the Co-Op miners will be raffled off. Miners at other nearby mines—union and nonunion alike—have begun selling tickets to show their continued support for the embattled workers. Local businesses where many miners work are also being asked to sell tickets.

Spouses of the miners plan to cook a huge pot of posole, a traditional Mexican pork stew, to be served at the event. Speakers will address the gathering on the latest developments, and on the importance of the Co-Op miners struggle to winning UMWA representation throughout the western United States. Co-Op miners have begun putting up informational tables to build for the event, talk to other workers, and give everyone a chance to financially support their fight. UMWA retirees have volunteered to help out in these efforts.

Heavy economic pressure on miners

According to some of the miners, the company is also increasing its pressure, hoping to lure workers back into the mine without the union. Most of the miners fired December 9 have been unable to find work at other local mines or businesses. Miners say one C.W. Mining company official has left the mine and started up a “contracting business” offering to hire miners fired by Co-Op to go back to work at the mine. The offer includes wages of \$5.50 for inexperienced miners and \$7 for those with experience.

Peabody to close union mine in Colorado

BY DANIELLE LONDON

CRAIG, Colorado—The Seneca coal mine, one of the two mines in northwest Colorado organized by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), will close by the end of 2005, throwing 100 surface miners out of work. A few miners will remain to do reclamation work, which is expected to last into next year.

Seneca, owned by Peabody Coal, is a captive mine that has provided more than 1 million tons of coal annually for the past four decades to the nearby power plant in Hayden, about 20 miles east of Craig. The St. Louis-based Peabody is the world’s largest privately owned coal company. The union’s contract with the company expires in September of this year.

Members of the UMWA Local 1385 laid off from Seneca will be put on a union panel that includes three other Peabody-owned mines—the Big Sky mine in southeastern Montana, and the Kayenta and Black Mesa mines on the Navajo Nation lands in Arizona. The possibilities of getting hired off the panel are slim.

The Big Sky mine shut down coal production in December 2003, laying off most of the 65 miners when it lost its contract selling coal to Minnesota Power and Light.

The owners of the Black Mesa mine have been involved in a battle with the Navajo and Hopi nations about the mine bosses’ use of water for mining while the Hopi and Navajo who live there face water shortages. Coal slurry from the Black Mesa mine is transported 273 miles to Southern California Edison’s Mohave Generating Station in Laughlin, Nevada, using a water-driven system that drains 3.3 million gallons of water daily from the aquifer below the desert lands of the two tribes. But the future of that power plant is not certain, leaving few hiring prospects at the Black Mesa mine.

In the Craig area, Peabody bought Twentymile Coal in April of last year. Twentymile is an underground nonunion coal mine that employs about 300 miners

Mine explosion in China kills 210; worst in 15 years



At least 210 coal miners were killed February 15 when a gas explosion ripped through a coal mine in China’s northeastern province of Liaoning. It is China’s worst mine disaster in 15 years, according to Chinese news services. Above, workers wait at the scene after the blast. Mine accidents killed 6,027 miners in China last year, according to the *People’s Daily*. The day after the explosion in Liaoning, another mine explosion in the southwestern province of Yunnan killed five miners and left 17 missing. So far this year 260 miners have been reported killed and 22 missing in mine accidents.

“This ploy by the company to get workers back underground without union representation is another desperate attempt by C.W. Mining to thwart the efforts of the overwhelming majority of the miners to win decent wages, working conditions, and basic dignity,” said Estrada. “The long delays between labor board decisions, even though almost all have been favorable to the miners, continues to aid the company in its fight against us.”

Co-Op miners say funds are especially important now to help the 22 unemployed miners with basic expenses. The Catholic Church of San Rafael Mission in Huntington helped the miners with their rents and utility bills for the month of January.

“The people who have helped before will be interested in supporting us now even more,” said Contreras. “With their support we can achieve what we all have been hoping and fighting for.”

Donations to the Co-Op miners can be sent to “Co-Op Miners Fund” c/o UMWA District 22, 525 East 100 South, Price, UT 84501.

Miners continue to urge supporters in the labor movement and other working people to write to the NLRB, urging the board to count the 27 ballots cast by the fired miners and to order the reinstatement of the dismissed workers to their jobs. Those letters should be addressed to: Robert J. Battista, NLRB Chairman, 1099 14th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20570-0001; and also to B. Allan Benson, NLRB Region 27 Director, 600 17th St., 7th floor—North Tower, Denver, CO 80202-5433 Tel: (303) 844-3551; Fax: (303) 844-6249.

Copies of those letters should be sent to the UMWA at the address listed above. For more information, call (435) 637-2037.

and ranked 18th among the country’s coal producers in 2003. Twentymile accounts for 5 percent of Peabody’s total coal production and about 20 percent of coal production in Colorado, the *Rocky Mountain News* reported. Peabody plans to increase production at the mine from its average of 8 million to 12 million tons per year within three years, making it one of the biggest mines in the nation. The company plans to hire more miners and install a new longwall system.

Longwall mining, a highly productive mining method used in underground mines, accounts for more than 50 percent of underground coal production, according to the Energy Information Administration.

Twentymile mine reopens nonunion

Twentymile mine had been a UMWA-organized surface mine, miners in the area report. When the owners replaced the surface mine with underground operations, it opened them nonunion.

Peabody also bought Empire mine near Craig as part of its purchase of Twentymile from RAG Coal International. Empire mine is a formerly UMWA-organized underground mine that was shut down in 1995 during a strike by UMWA Local 1799, miners report. Empire still has many coal reserves and Peabody is evaluating whether to reopen the mine, according to press reports.

Members of UMWA Local 1799, which includes former Empire miners and retirees, still meet every month in Craig.

“The coal reserves that are economically mineable have been depleted” at the Seneca mine, company spokeswoman Beth Sutton told the *Denver Post* on January 4. But many workers at Seneca believe the bosses are shutting down the mine to get rid of the union.

Peabody also owns coal reserves south of Hayden, that stretch west of Seneca to east of Trapper, a surface mine organized by the Brotherhood of Operating Engineers Local 9. Many say that after Seneca shuts down the company will also try to open up mining

in these reserves without the union.

The last remaining UMWA-organized mine in northwestern Colorado is the Deserado mine, an underground mine owned by Blue Mountain Energy. In the last few years, miners report, there have been unsuccessful attempts to organize the UMWA at the Twentymile mine as well as the Colowyo mine, a surface mine owned by Kennecott Energy in northwest Colorado. The *Steamboat Pilot* reported that many of the workers at Seneca who will be laid off are in their 40s and 50s. Some have worked at the mine for many years, but will not be quite old enough to collect a pension when the mine shuts down. Terry Green, 53, spent 25 years ranching before hiring on. He became a heavy equipment operator at the mine after losing the lease on his ranch, according to the *Pilot*. He hasn’t worked at the company long enough to accrue much retirement.

Coal production in Colorado has nearly doubled since 1990.

The state of Colorado produced a record 40 million tons of coal last year, up 12 percent from its record in 2003. In 2004 Colorado was the sixth-highest coal producing state in the country. Colorado coal production is expected to reach another high this year with strong demand from utility companies in the eastern United States.

“More of (Colorado’s) coal is going back East because of the tougher mining conditions there and the thinning of coal seams,” Charles Burggraf, group executive of Colorado operations for Peabody Energy Co., told the National Western Mining Conference in Denver February 2, according to the *Denver Post*. The daily also reported, “Peabody intends to make up for Seneca’s loss by increasing production at the Twentymile mine by 40 percent over the next four years.”

Stronger demand for western coal has nearly doubled the price of Colorado coal. The spot price went from \$14 per ton in 2003 to \$27 per ton in 2004, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Cuba's example teaches that revolution is possible

Below is an excerpt from *The Second Declaration of Havana*. Pathfinder's Spanish-language edition of the document is one of the publisher's Books of the Month for February. The declaration was read by Cuban president Fidel Castro to a rally of one million in Havana on Feb. 4, 1962. A few days earlier, on Washington's orders, Cuba had been expelled from the Organization of American States (OAS). The OAS in turn called on governments throughout the hemisphere to cut all economic and diplomatic ties with revolutionary Cuba. On the day before the rally where the declaration was read, Washington instituted an embargo on U.S. trade with Cuba, which remains in place today, 43 years later. Copyright © 1994 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

The duty of every revolutionist is to make the revolution. It is known that the revolution will triumph in the Americas and throughout the world, but it is not for revolutionists to sit in the doorways of their houses waiting for the corpse of imperialism to pass by. The role of Job does not suit a revolutionist. Each year that the liberation of Latin America is speeded up will mean the lives of millions of children saved, millions of intellects saved for culture, an infinite quantity of pain spared the people. Even if the Yankee imperialists prepare a bloody drama for Latin America, they will not succeed in crushing the peoples' struggles; they will only arouse universal hatred against themselves. And such a drama will also mark the death of their greedy and stone-age system.

No nation in Latin America is weak—be-



Bohemia

Rally in the Plaza of the Revolution in Havana to support the proclamation of the Second Declaration of Havana, February 1962.

cause each forms part of a family of 200 million brothers, who suffer the same miseries, who harbor the same sentiments, who have the same enemy, who dream about the same better future and who count upon the solidarity of all honest men and women throughout the world.

Great as was the epic of Latin American independence, heroic as was that struggle, today's generation of Latin Americans is called upon to engage in an epic that is even greater and more decisive for humanity. For that struggle was for liberation from Spanish colonial power, from a decadent Spain invaded by the armies of Napoleon. Today the call for struggle is for liberation from the most powerful world imperialist center, from the strongest force of world imperialism and to render humanity a greater service than that rendered by our predecessors.

But this struggle, to a greater extent than the earlier one, will be waged by the masses, will be carried out by the people: the people are going to play a much more important role now than they did then, the leaders are less important and will be less important in this struggle than in the one before.

This epic before us is going to be written by the hungry Indian masses, the peasants without land, the exploited workers. It is going to be written by the progressive masses, the honest and brilliant intellectuals, who so greatly abound in our suffering Latin

American lands. A struggle of masses and of ideas. An epic that will be carried forward by our peoples, mistreated and scorned by imperialism; our people, unreckoned with until today, who are now beginning to shake off their slumber. Imperialism considered us a weak and submissive flock; and now it begins to be terrified of that flock; a gigantic flock of 200 million Latin Americans in whom Yankee monopoly capitalism now sees its gravediggers.

This toiling humanity, these inhumanly exploited, these paupers, controlled by the system of whip and overseer, have not been reckoned with or have been little reckoned with. From the dawn of independence their fate has been the same: Indians, gauchos, mestizos, zambos, quadroons, whites without property or income, all this human mass that formed the ranks of the "nation," which never reaped any benefits, which fell by the millions, which was cut into bits, which won independence from the mother country for the bourgeoisie, which was shut out from its share of the rewards, which continued to occupy the lowest step on the ladder of social benefits, continued to die of hunger, curable diseases, and neglect, because for them there were never enough life-giving goods—ordinary bread, a hospital bed, medicine that cures, a hand that aids.

But now from one end of the continent

to the other they are signaling with clarity that the hour has come—the hour of their redemption. Now this anonymous mass, this America of color, somber, taciturn America, which all over the continent sings with the same sadness and disillusionment, now this mass is beginning to enter definitively into its own history, is beginning to write it with its own blood, is beginning to suffer and die for it.

Because now in the fields and mountains of the Americas, on its flatlands and in its jungles, in the wilderness and in the traffic of its cities, on the banks of its great oceans and rivers, this world is beginning to tremble. Anxious hands are stretched forth, ready to die for what is theirs, to win those rights that were laughed at by one and all for five hundred years. Yes, now history will have to take the poor of the Americas into account, the exploited and spurned of the Americas, who have decided to begin writing their history for themselves for all time. Already they can be seen on the roads, on foot, day after day, in an endless march of hundreds of kilometers up to the Mt. Olympus of government to obtain their rights.

Already they can be seen armed with stones, sticks, machetes, in one direction and another, each day, occupying lands, sinking hooks into the land which belongs to them and defending it with their lives. They can be seen carrying signs, slogans, flags; letting them flap in the mountain or prairie winds. And the wave of anger, of demands for justice, of claims for rights trampled underfoot, which is beginning to sweep the lands of Latin America, will not stop. That wave will swell with every passing day. For that wave is composed of the greatest number, the majorities in every respect, those whose labor amasses the wealth and turns the wheels of history. Now they are awakening from the long, brutalizing sleep to which they had been subjected.

For this great mass of humanity has said, "Enough!" and has begun to march. And their march of giants will not be halted until they conquer true independence—for which they have died in vain more than once. Today, however, those who die will die like the Cubans at Playa Girón: they will die for their own, true, never-to-be-surrendered independence.

Patria o muerte! [Homeland or death]
Venceremos! [We will win]

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February

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FBI plot against the Black movement

On the occasion of Black History Month, we reprint below an excerpt from *The Assassination of Malcolm X*. Using first-hand coverage of the trial of those charged with Malcolm's assassination, the book shows how the government ignored and twisted vital evidence in order to prevent the truth from coming out. The excerpt below is from an article entitled 'FBI plot against the Black movement.' It precedes the appendix, which contains facsimiles of previously secret FBI documents that shed light on the government's hostility to Malcolm X and point toward its complicity in his murder. The article first appeared in the April 1974 issue of *The Black Scholar*. Copyright © 1976 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY BAXTER SMITH

Proof of a vast government conspiracy to physically and politically destroy the Black movement in the U.S. has been uncovered in the most recent Watergate-related disclosures about the FBI. These disclosures reveal the hatred and fear of the rulers of this country for the Black liberation struggle as well as the ruthlessness with which they have tried to crush it.

The new facts now coming to light—including information linking the government to the murders of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Fred Hampton—are prompting demands for a full public inquiry into the secret-police operations of the FBI against the Black movement. Operation PUSH leader Jesse Jackson and Congressman Ralph Metcalfe (Democrat from Illinois) have both recently urged an investigation into the government surveillance program against Blacks, which Jackson has termed "a mandate to commit murder."

The extent of this surveillance first became clear last December, when NBC newsman Carl Stern gained access to the FBI's COINTELPRO (counterintelligence program) documents. Stern won access to the files through a suit based on the Freedom of Information Act. The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance have also received and publicized some of the secret COINTELPRO documents through a suit they have filed against government harassment.

These documents reveal that the FBI has implemented COINTELPRO against Black groups, antiwar activists, the Social-

ist Workers Party, the Communist Party, and others.

Documents released March 7, 1974, present a clear picture of how COINTELPRO was set into motion against the Black movement. One memo, signed by J. Edgar Hoover and sent to FBI agents across the country, said, "The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters...."

Dating from the period 1967 to 1970, these documents debunk the notion that illegal government surveillance and disruption began with the Nixon administration.

Never meant to be read by the American people, they reveal a coordinated, national program of repression organized in response to the Black ghetto rebellions, the Black student upsurge, and the attraction of young militants to the Black Panther Party.

One memo, dated August 25, 1967, for example, tells FBI agents to prevent Black nationalist groups from being able to "consolidate their forces or recruit new or youthful adherents...." It also says that "no opportunity should be missed to exploit through counterintelligence techniques the organizational and personal conflicts of the leadership of the groups and where possible an effort should be made to capitalize upon existing conflicts between competing black nationalist organizations."

A March 4, 1968, document warns: "Prevent the coalition of militant black nationalist groups. In unity there is strength...." The memo also urges agents to "prevent militant nationalist groups and leaders from gaining respectability, by discrediting them...."

One document lists as a key goal: "Prevent the rise of a 'messiah' who could unify, and electrify, the militant black nationalist movement."

Before it turned over the documents, the FBI blotted out the names of individuals and groups listed as "targets." But it is not difficult to guess what belongs in the censored spaces. In the document on "messiahs," for example, the name of Malcolm X fits into one blanked-out area. That sentence would then read: "[Malcolm X] might have been such a 'messiah': he is the martyr of the movement today."

A following sentence might read: "[King could] be a very real contender for this



Gannett Rochester Newspapers/Peter Hickey

Malcolm X speaking at Corn Hill Methodist Church in Rochester, New York, Feb. 16, 1965, just five days before his assassination.

position should he abandon his supposed 'obedience' to 'white, liberal doctrines' (nonviolence) and embrace black nationalism." This memo was written one month before King's murder.

Thus, as Jesse Jackson recently pointed out, these documents amount to a "search and destroy mission" against the Black movement. The killings of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Fred Hampton, he explained, "were consistent with the stated purpose of the memo to prevent the rise of a messiah." And there are plenty of other indications that the government had a hand in these assassinations.

Malcolm X was the most capable Black leader of our time and greatly feared by the rulers of this country. Many questions about his murder remain unanswered.

When he was shot at a New York rally in 1965, the crowd seized two of his assailants before they could escape. The police arrested the two men and took them away, as the first newspaper reports explained. But only one of the men was ever seen again. All mention of the second man was dropped from the press without explanation, and the issue was never brought up in the trial by the court-appointed defense lawyers.

Talmadge Hayer—the man arrested at the rally and convicted—admitted his role in the assassination but refused to name his accomplices. Furthermore, he insisted that the two men convicted with him had nothing to do with the killing. This assertion gains credibility because the others convicted of the murder were known Black Muslims, and no explanation of how they could have slipped into the rally past Malcolm's security

guards has ever been presented.

Although uniformed police were usually highly visible at meetings addressed by Malcolm, they were hardly in evidence the day he was shot. Malcolm himself had indicated that he considered the harassment directed against him in the last weeks of his life to be beyond the ability of any Black group to organize.

It is now known that Martin Luther King, Jr., was under intense government surveillance prior to his murder. In the spring of 1973 Arthur Murtaugh, a former FBI agent from Atlanta, revealed to the New York Times that J. Edgar Hoover had ordered a campaign to "get King." Wiretapping and other surveillance of the civil rights leader was so thorough that King "couldn't wiggle. They had him."

This information is all the more revealing now that James Earl Ray, the man convicted of killing King, has stated that he did not act alone. Ray says he was part of a conspiracy of white southerners. He recently filed a \$500,000 damage suit against the state of Tennessee and is demanding a new trial. He says he was improperly represented by his attorney during the original trial.

The state of Tennessee, in the meantime, is trying to transfer Ray to a federal prison, where he will be isolated from the public. George McMillan, who is writing a biography of Ray, explained in the March 25, 1974, *New York Times* that under present prison regulations, "If James Earl Ray is moved into a Federal prison he will never again be able to talk face-to-face to the press, to television interviewers, or to authors of magazine articles or books."

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



February 29, 1980

Carter says the sending of Soviet troops to help the Afghan government makes it necessary for American men and women to accept the draft. What does Carter want us to fight for?

A report from Pakistan in the February 9 *New York Times* tells a lot about the "freedom fighters" Carter supports in Afghanistan and why they want to overturn the government there.

Take the former headmaster of an Afghan school—now one of those battling the government. He complained to *Times* reporter James Sterba, "The government imposed various ordinances allowing women freedom to marry anyone they choose without their parents' consent."

"They invited women to meetings," declared another rightist.

"The Government said our women had to attend meetings and our children had to go to schools," another said. "We had to fight."

Many Afghan villagers don't share his outrage, it seems. The "rebels" told Sterba how they raid villages and "bring [Afghans] with us forcefully until they see that our cause is right."

And these reactionaries who oppose the first steps toward freeing women and

ending illiteracy are presented to us as "freedom fighters"!



February 28, 1955

How to keep one-and-a-half billion Asian and African people in colonial bondage or drive them back to it—that is the major problem confronting the U.S. State Department today.

What brings this problem acutely to the fore for the U.S. government is the 30-nation Africa-Asia conference scheduled for the end of April in Bandung, Indonesia. Its sponsors are the so-called Colombo powers—India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon—whose prime ministers originally met in April 1954 and issued a declaration condemning Western interference in the affairs of Asian nations.

The capitalist class in these countries struggles against imperialism only for limited aims and launches repressions against genuine freedom fighters—the workers and peasants—in their own countries.

Just the same, it is the tremendous groundswell of anti-imperialist sentiment among hundreds of millions of workers and peasants that is forcing the nationalist leaders in Asia and Africa to make anti-imperialist pronouncements.

Further reading from Pathfinder Press

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Malcolm X Talks to Young People

Malcolm X habla a la juventud

New and expanded edition includes, for the first time in print, the entire December 1964 debate presentation by Malcolm X at the Oxford Union and the February 1965 speech at the London School of Economics. \$15.00

Fighting Racism in World War II \$21.95

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

by Jack Barnes—This is a handbook for young people who, in growing numbers, are repelled by the racism, women's inequality, and other intolerable social relations reproduced every day by the normal operations of capitalism on a world scale. \$23.00

From the Escambray to the Congo

by Victor Dreke—In a participant's account, Victor Dreke describes how easy it became after the Cuban Revolution to "take down the rope" segregating blacks from whites at dances, yet how enormous was the battle to transform social relations underlying all the "ropes" inherited from capitalism and Yankee domination. \$17.00

Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle by Thomas Sankara \$5.00

Order online at: www.pathfinderpress.com

No to U.S. threats on Syria, Iran, Korea!

No to the U.S.-led imperialist squeeze on Syria! Oppose Washington’s campaign to press Iran to end its nuclear energy program! Support the right of semicolonial nations threatened by imperialism—including the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK)—to arm and defend themselves by whatever means necessary and effective! Working people and youth should campaign with these demands, aiming their fire at Washington and other imperialist governments.

U.S. imperialism and its allies show enormous hypocrisy. America’s properties rulers—whose government is the only one ever to use nuclear weapons, against the Japanese and Korean residents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—press full steam ahead in their efforts to achieve nuclear first-strike capacity, including the initial deployment last year in collaboration with Tokyo of a land- and sea-based antiballistic missile weapons system. At the same time, U.S. finance capital is escalating its belligerent demands that north Korea dismantle its nuclear program.

The government of north Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 2003. It has defended its right, and proclaimed its intention, to continue developing nuclear weapons for its defense. The DPRK is the target of a multifront effort, including by Beijing, to force it to halt development of its nuclear program. At the same time, Washington has aided south Korea’s effort to sweep under the rug the fact that as recently as 2000 it produced weapons-grade plutonium and uranium in experiments hidden from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Washington’s demands on Iran, the DPRK, and other semicolonial countries to abandon nuclear enrichment programs needed to produce electrical power reek of imperial arrogance. A majority of the world’s working people has no access to modern forms of fuel or electricity. This illustrates the vast disparity today in social and cultural conditions created and reproduced by the social relations of capitalism. We must defend efforts by the governments of oppressed nations in Asia, the Pacific, Africa, and the Americas to bridge this gap—one that keeps growing—by extending access to electricity to the billions who live without it. This would strengthen the capacity of the toilers to organize and advance politically. And the development and use of nuclear technology is necessary to make this possible.

The imperialist powers have effectively nullified the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty by declaring, contrary to treaty provisions, that “nonnuclear weapons states” will be barred from developing technology and facilities needed to produce uranium sufficiently enriched to power reactors for energy production. With varying degrees of success, the U.S. government is pressing the IAEA to turn itself more and more into an inter-

national police force targeting semicolonial countries deemed insufficiently compliant with imperialist demands to abrogate their sovereignty and treaty rights. Washington’s campaign to replace Mohamed ElBaradei as head of the IAEA is part of its efforts to accelerate that organization’s police work on behalf of the billionaire families that rule the United States.

The Iranian government has come under increasing pressure, above all from Washington, to agree to unconditional inspection of all its nuclear facilities and to abandon nuclear power development. This program was initiated with imperialism’s aid and blessings under the pro-imperialist dictatorship of the shah, who was overthrown in the 1979 revolutionary upsurge. London, Paris, and Berlin have joined in this squeeze on Tehran, regardless of the disputes between them and Washington over how fast and how far to go in tightening the vise.

Wiping out Iran’s nuclear potential remains Israel’s top strategic objective, prompting frequent references to Tel Aviv’s 1981 air strike that destroyed Iraq’s nuclear reactor at Osirak. Tehran’s nuclear facilities are more geographically spread out than were Baghdad’s—a lesson learned from the 1981 strike. Only when Washington believes the odds of success are high, or that is has no other choice, will it initiate military action against Iran, or agree to Tel Aviv doing the dirty work. As shown by the virtually simultaneous destruction of Iraqi antiaircraft positions in the opening hours of the 2003 war, however, U.S. special operations forces can locate and take out widely dispersed installations with devastating speed and effectiveness. They have long ago begun the initial reconnaissance and other steps inside Iran to prepare for such an eventuality.

The U.S. rulers are now using the pretext of a “terrorist” bombing in Beirut to demand that Damascus take action against émigré Baathist forces in Syria who organize and finance the flow of weapons and combatants into Iraq; that the Assad regime continue its de facto acceptance of U.S. military operations inside Syrian territory along the Iraqi border; that Syrian troops be withdrawn from Lebanon; and that the Syrian government cease efforts to obtain “weapons of mass destruction.” Washington is using its military successes in Afghanistan and Iraq to press any regime in the region that refuses to toe the line. The massive presence and occupations by U.S. troops in the area increase the likelihood of more wars.

Working people should demand the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq, Guantánamo Bay in Cuba, Afghanistan, the Korean peninsula and its waters, and wherever else they are trampling on national sovereignty. And they should oppose Washington’s threats against the people of Syria, Iran, the DPRK, or any other semicolonial country.

Lynne Stewart

Continued from front page
and attack other city landmarks. In 1996 he was sentenced to life in prison plus 65 years, and is being held at the maximum security prison in Florence, Colorado.

U.S. District Court Judge John Koeltl set sentencing for July 15. Stewart faces a maximum of somewhere between 20 to 45 years in jail, according to media reports that give different figures. The jury also found her co-defendants guilty of all charges. Mohammed Yousry, an Arabic translator, faces up to 20 years in prison for “providing material support to terrorists.” A possible life sentence hangs over Abdel-Sattar, a paralegal for Abdel-Rahman, who was convicted of conspiracy for “plotting” to “kill and kidnap persons in a foreign country,” according to an Associated Press dispatch.

For more than two years the government had wiretapped conversations between Stewart and her client, Abdel-Rahman, and videotaped their meetings in prison. Since October 2001 the Justice Department has had the authority to conduct surveillance of prisoners with their attorneys without judicial oversight. At a pretrial hearing, a prosecutor acknowledged that “intercepted calls are the backbone of the government case.”

On April 9, 2002, then U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft personally announced the charges against Stewart, claiming she had violated the 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, passed under the administration of William Clinton.

After the verdict was announced, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales immediately boasted that the case set a precedent that the government would use to press ahead with similar prosecutions. “The convictions handed down by a federal jury in New York today send a clear, unmistakable message that this department will pursue both those who carry out acts of terrorism and those who assist them with their murderous goals,” said Gonzales.

“We are not giving up, obviously. We are going to fight on,” Stewart told the media as she left the courthouse after the verdict came down. “You can’t tell lawyers how to do their job. You’ve got to let them operate,” she said, “I know I committed no crime. I know what I did was right.” Stewart said she would appeal her conviction. She is free on bail, under restrictions that prohibit her from traveling outside the state of New York. Convicted of a felony, she was immediately disbarred.

Stewart was convicted on two “terrorism” counts, according to the *New York Times*, for “conspiring to provide material aid to terrorists,” by making the views and instructions of Mr. Abdel Rahman available to his followers.”

Prosecution ‘evidence’

Part of the prosecution’s “evidence” included showing videos of Osama bin Laden meeting with one of Abdel-Rahman’s sons. Following that the judge felt compelled to instruct the jury that Stewart was not on trial for the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. At the courthouse after her conviction, Stewart told the media, “When you put Osama bin Laden in a courtroom and ask the jury to ignore it, that’s asking a lot.”

Stewart was also convicted on three counts of violating the Special Administrative Measures (SAMs) that Washington imposed on Abdel-Rahman, which include restrictions on his access to mail, telephones, and visitors, and a prohibition on his speaking to the media. Because Stewart released a statement to the press from Abdel-Rahman in June 2000, the *Times* reported, “She was also convicted of three counts of perjury and defrauding the government for flouting federal prison rules.”

During the trial Stewart said she was not guilty of the SAMs charges because she had been fulfilling her obligation as an attorney to her client. By getting his message out, she said, she was able to keep his case alive and help expose both his prison conditions and the charges on which he was convicted.

A *New York Post* editorial cheered the prospect of Stewart spending “a very long time—behind bars,” the day after her conviction. The editorial disparaged the government’s use of trials, in which defendants can bring evidence and witnesses before a jury,” as being an effective means to carry out Washington’s “war on terrorism.”

“It is true that yesterday’s conviction demonstrates that the criminal-justice system can indeed work in some terror cases. But it by no means follows that the War on Terror can be fought primarily as a law-enforcement exercise,” wrote the *Post* editors. “There’s a place for vigorous criminal prosecutions in the War on Terror—as long as no one loses sight of the fact that there’s also a critical role for the 101st Airborne Division.”

Supporters of Stewart’s case are planning actions to protest the convictions. In a February 11 statement, the National Executive Committee of the National Lawyers Guild called on its local chapters to organize actions February 17 in a “National Day of Outrage.”

Washington pulls ambassador from Syria

Continued from front page

decision. “Syria maintains a sizeable presence of military and intelligence officials in Lebanon, in contravention of the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559.... In recent months we have raised repeatedly with senior officials of the Syrian government a number of issues, including the Syrian presence in Lebanon, the continued presence and operational activities of international terrorist groups and of the Iranian regime on and through Syrian territory, and the use of Syrian territory by the Iraqi insurgency. To date, these concerns have not been adequately addressed.”

The same day, the United Nations Security Council issued a statement condemning the assassination. It reaffirmed the UN body’s call for the “restoration of the territorial integrity, full sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon.” This refers primarily to the more than 14,000 Syrian troops stationed in the country. Last September Hariri, who has campaigned for the withdrawal of Syrian troops, played a role in getting the UN Security Council to pass resolution 1559, which calls for “all remaining foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon.”

“Syria has got to get out of Lebanon,” the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Anne Patterson, told the press.

French president Jacques Chirac, whose government has sup-

ported the call for withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, called for an “international investigation” into Hariri’s assassination. A billionaire construction tycoon, Hariri resigned his post as prime minister last year amid opposition to a constitutional amendment that extended the term of Lebanese president Emile Lahoud, a close ally of the Syrian government. Hariri continued to lead an important opposition bloc in Lebanon’s parliament.

More than 200,000 people joined Hariri’s funeral procession February 16. The *Washington Post* reported that many carried banners expressing opposition to the Syrian military presence with slogans like “Syria Out” and “Hey Syria—Who’s Next?”

Damascus denied any involvement in the sophisticated bombing attack. Syria’s vice president, Abdel-Halim Khaddam, claimed Tel Aviv was responsible, Arab-language television reported, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. A previously unknown group, calling itself Victory and Jihad, claimed responsibility for the attack, saying the target was the Saudi royal family that had close business ties to Hariri.

Washington has stepped up its pressure on Damascus since the U.S.-led takeover of Iraq in 2003. U.S. forces have been stationed along the Syrian border, and U.S. warplanes have pounded the area with up to 1-ton bombs.

In May 2003, immediately after U.S. president George Bush declared the end of combat in Iraq, the Syria Accountability Act was introduced into Congress. The law gives the president authority to slap trade sanctions on Syria, and demands that Damascus “immediately and unconditionally halt support for terrorism, permanently and openly declare its total renunciation of all forms of terrorism, and close all terrorist offices and facilities in Syria, including the offices of Hamas, Hizballah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.” It further demands the Syrian government withdraw its troops from Lebanon, end the production of short- and medium-range ballistic missiles, chemical and biological weapons, and enter into “peace” negotiations with the Israeli government.

The measure sailed through both houses of Congress in November 2003 with nearly unanimous bipartisan support. Its main sponsors were Democratic senator Barbara Boxer, a well-known liberal from California, and Republican senator Richard Santorum.

In addition to withdrawing its ambassador to Syria, Washington is discussing using the Syria Accountability Act to take further punitive measures against Damascus, the *Wall Street Journal* reported. This could include banning all trade waivers that had allowed Damascus to buy a range of U.S. goods despite the sanctions, limiting or ending the issuing of visas to Syrian government officials, and restricting the movements of Syrian diplomats in the United States.

Corrections

The caption accompanying the article “Utah miners fighting for union speak at ‘Harlan County’ screening” in the February 14 issue incorrectly said the miners spoke at the screening of the remastered version of the film *Harlan County, U.S.A.* on January 29. The correct date is January 28, as stated in the article.

In reporting on the Nebraska stop of a national speaking tour by U.S. president George Bush to promote the administration’s proposals to “reform” Social Security, the article “U.S. rulers campaign for cuts in social wage” in the February 21 issue incorrectly stated that Bush spoke at the University of Nebraska. The actual location was the Qwest Center, a large convention center in downtown Omaha. The article also said that Senator Ben Nelson is the “only Democrat in the U.S. Senate to side with Bush so far on Social Security ‘reform’...” Nelson was the only Democrat to decline to sign a letter to Bush opposing the administration’s proposals and has said he is willing to “hear the president out.” But following a meeting with Bush on the Omaha stop, Nelson said he needs to see more details before deciding whether to back the proposal, the *Omaha World Herald* reported.

Talk by Mary-Alice Waters

Continued from Page 5
of women to fight for their emancipation. As he says in one of the speeches published here, a talk that presents the program of the government he headed, “The revolution and women’s liberation go together. We do not talk of women’s emancipation as an act of charity or because of a surge of human compassion. It is a basic necessity for the triumph of the revolution. Women hold up the other half of the sky.”

Sankara’s powerful speech on *Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle*, given on international women’s day, March 8, 1987, has been published by Pathfinder as a pamphlet that is available in four languages—French, English, Spanish, and Farsi. Some 12,000 copies of that title have been sold since it first appeared in English translation almost 15 years ago—more than 1,500 in Farsi in Iran alone.

We are proud that with the publication of this selection of some of the most representative of Sankara’s other speeches, his voice will now be heard more broadly in Spanish. *Somos herederos de las revoluciones del mundo*

del mundo includes his wonderful speech on imperialism’s destruction of the trees and forests of Africa, given to an international conference in Paris in 1986. Before the president of France and other top dignitaries of the imperialist government, Sankara affirmed:

The battle against the encroachment of the desert is a battle to establish a balance between man, nature, and society. As such, it is a battle that is above all political, one whose outcome is not determined by fate....

As Karl Marx said, those who live in a palace do not think the same things, nor in the same way, as those who live in a hut. This struggle to defend the trees and the forests is above all a struggle against imperialism. Imperialism is the arsonist setting fire to our forests and savannahs.

That speech by Sankara is cited extensively in the new issue of the magazine *Nueva Internacional*, copies of which will also be available at the table outside following today’s presentation. From its lead article, “Our Politics Start with the World,” by Jack Barnes, to the picture of “Earth at Night” on its back cover—a photo that provides a stark measure of the economic and cultural inequalities, the veritable abyss, that exists between the imperialist and semi-colonial countries, and among classes within almost every country—this issue of the magazine of Marxist politics and theory distributed by Pathfinder deals in depth with the same political issues and course of action Sankara fought to advance.

Revolutionary internationalism

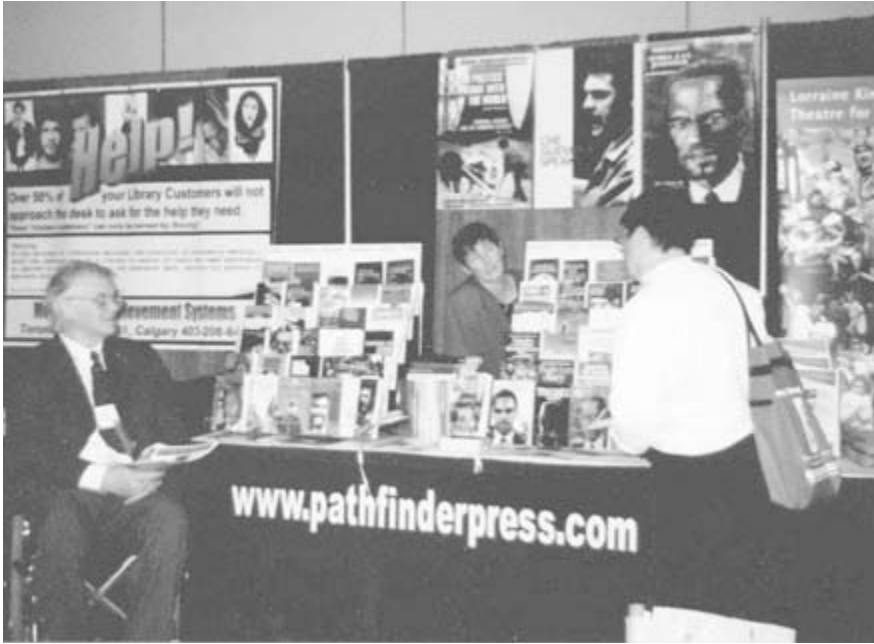
To end, I want to point to the depth of Sankara’s internationalism so evident in these pages. For him, the popular, democratic, revolutionary struggle of the people of Burkina Faso was one with the struggles to bring down the apartheid regime of South Africa; it was one with the anti-imperialist struggles of the people of Angola, Namibia, Palestine, Western Sahara, and Nicaragua; it was one with the people of Harlem who so warmly welcomed him there in 1984, and other working people across the United States and the imperialist world.

It was in Managua in 1986 that I had the pleasure of meeting and coming to know him as a leader. We were both delegates to an international conference marking the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Sandinista National Liberation Front and the 10th anniversary of the fall of Carlos Fonseca in combat. Sankara was chosen to speak at the rally on behalf of the 180 international delegations present there.

When he learned that a delegation from the Socialist Workers Party in the United States was present, he made a point of heading straight over to our table to greet us. It was not just as an act of diplomacy; he came to talk politics with fellow revolutionists. He knew well that the *Militant* was one of the few papers outside Africa that regularly wrote about the revolutionary course unfolding in Burkina Faso, carrying interviews and speeches by Sankara whenever we could get them.

The presentation of *Somos herederos de las revoluciones del mundo* here in Cuba is

Pathfinder takes part in Ontario librarians’ event



Militant

Pathfinder Press booth at the February 3–5 Ontario Library Association conference in Toronto, Canada. Dozens of librarians signed up for more information on titles distributed by Pathfinder, including *New Internacional* no. 13, featuring “Our Politics Starts with the World” by Jack Barnes (see ad on page 5).

especially appropriate because of the final selection it contains, Sankara’s tribute to Che on Oct. 8, 1987. That 20th anniversary of Che’s fall in combat was barely a week before the counterrevolutionary coup d’état that ended Sankara’s own life.

It is only because of a fortunate combination of circumstances that Sankara’s words at that event are available to us today, that they have not been lost. The exhibition focusing on Che’s revolutionary course and example, inaugurated that day by Sankara, coincided with the opening of an international anti-apartheid conference in Ouagadougou attended by delegations from some 29 countries. Among them were compañeros from the United States and Canada, supporters of the newspaper the *Militant*, and of Pathfinder. They were looking at the displays when Sankara ar-

rived together with [Che’s son] Camilo and a number of other Cuban compañeros. When Sankara began his impromptu remarks, one of the Canadian compañeras turned on a tape recorder she had in her pocket and recorded them. The *Militant* transcribed and published them shortly afterward, and they are included here in their totality.

Che taught us “we could dare to have confidence in ourselves, confidence in our abilities,” Sankara pointed out on that occasion. Che instilled in us the conviction that “struggle is our only recourse.”

Che, Sankara insisted, was “a citizen of the free world that together we are in the process of building. That is why we say that Che Guevara is also African and Burkinabè.”

What more appropriate place to end?

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Legacy of Malcolm X, Revolutionary Internationalist Speaker: Dean Hazelwood, Socialist Workers Party, Fri., Feb. 25. Dinner 6:30 p.m., program 7:30 p.m., 4229 South Central Ave., (323) 233-9372

PENNSYLVANIA

Hazleton

Mississippi Klansman Indicted for Murder of Civil Rights Workers Speaker: Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers Party, Sat., Feb. 26. Dinner 6:30 p.m., program 7:30 p.m. Dinner \$5, program \$5, 69 N. Wyoming St., (570) 454-8320

Pittsburgh

How Cuba Has Advanced the Fight for Black and African Liberation Speaker: Martha Ressler, Socialist Workers Party and

member United Mine Workers of America, Sat., Feb. 26. Donation: \$4.00. Dinner 6:30 p.m., program 7:30 p.m. 5907 Penn. Ave., Room 225. (412) 365-1090

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

U.S. and All Other Foreign Troops Out of Iraq! Speaker: Patrick Brown, Communist League, Sat., Feb. 26, 7 p.m., 129-131 Gloucester St., at ‘The Gloucester’ Arcade (near Theatre Royal) Tel.03-365-6055

UNITED KINGDOM

London

The Revolutionary Legacy of Malcolm X Speaker: Celia Pugh, Communist League, Fri., Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m., 120 Bethnal Green Rd., First fl., (Entrance in Brick Lane) 020 7613 3855

CALENDAR

Documentary Film Showing on Case of the Cuban Five ‘Mission Against Terror’

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA

Sun., Feb. 20, 7 p.m. San Luis Obispo Library. (805) 627-1959.

EUGENE, OR

Mon., Feb. 21, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5–\$10. University of Oregon, 100 Williamette Hall. (541) 343-1572.

SEATTLE, WA

Wed., Feb. 23, 7 p.m. Donation: \$10. 911 Media Arts Center Theater, 402 9th Ave.

RIVERSIDE, CA

Thurs., Feb. 24, 7 p.m. Coffee Depot, 3204 Mission Inn Ave. (951) 653-0743.

SANTA BARBARA, CA

Fri., Feb. 25, 7 p.m. Kareles Manuscript Museum 21 W. Anapamu St. (805) 646-7129.

LOS ANGELES, CA

Sat., Feb. 26, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5–\$10. First United Methodist Church, 1010 S. Flower St. (323) 464-1636.

OAKLAND, CA

Sun., Feb. 27, 3 p.m. Casa Cuba, 6501 Telegraph Ave.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

‘The Revolution Will Not Be Televised’ Video Documentary, followed by a meeting of the Detroit Local Organizing Committee for the 16th World Youth Festival, Tue., Feb. 22, 7:30 p.m. Wayne State University Student Center, Room 261A. detroitworld youthfestival2005@yahoo.com.

LETTERS

Iraq coverage is wrong

The *Militant’s* coverage of the Iraq has grown increasingly superficial and inaccurate.

A few points: Sam Manuel and the *Militant* apparently feel that 45 Iraq deaths are “relatively minor.” This reflects, unconsciously, an American-centered mindset that Iraqi lives are less valuable than American. You fail to note that a British transport plane was shot down on election day, killing 10 soldiers.

You also state that: “Wealthy Sunnis were the backbone of support for the Hussein regime.” This is inaccurate.

So-called secular Shiites and Sunnis both played a role in the Baathist regime. Allawi, himself a former Baathist assassin, is a Shiite.

Kurdish separatism is not something unexpected by Washington. Their unofficial vote for independence was tacitly backed by Bremer, as a way of encouraging the breakup and factionalization of Iraq. The destruction of Fallujah, a poor backwater in Al-Anbar, was also designed to enflame Sunni chauvinism.

Only by encouraging sectarianism can the U.S. hope to continue occupying the region. An Iraq united under a nationalist movement could toss out the undermanned U.S. forces within a year.

Lastly, you have failed to mention the many reports that Kurdish paramilitary forces are training with Israeli special forces.

Ben Roberts
San Francisco, California

Clinton and right to choose

Senator Hillary Clinton’s call for pro-choice activists to seek “common ground” with opponents of legal abortion, which has been enthusiastically endorsed by some liberal commentators, is not a new idea. Some years ago, leaders of the National Organization for Women sought a meeting with anti-choice groups to seek “common ground” for reducing the need for abortion through such means as promoting access to birth control and better services for women who choose to carry their pregnancies to term. The meeting ended in bitterness when the anti-choice groups refused to discuss anything at all except outlawing abortion.

Some feminists mistakenly believe that it is a contradiction that abortion opponents also oppose

birth control and any other means of reducing unwanted pregnancies. In fact it is not a contradiction at all; both positions are part of their overall reactionary program. Calls for seeking “common ground” with opponents of legal abortion politically disarm women by presenting these forces as being genuinely concerned with women’s lives, when in fact they are the shock troops of the war on women’s rights.

Carol Sholin
Castro Valley, California

KKK in Sweden

On February 5 American Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke spoke at a meeting in Stockholm, which gathered 60 racists. The location of the meeting was at a boat clubhouse of the Hammarby

sports club. Hammarby claims that they didn’t realize who was renting the building from them that night and a spokesman says that the man who picked up the key “was wearing a suit and looked like a business man, not a racist.” The police were notified but decided not to intervene in the meeting.

Hammarby has published a statement on its webpage apologizing. Per Leander
Stockholm, Sweden

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Wal-Mart to close union store in Canada

BY JOE YATES

MONTREAL—On February 9, Wal-Mart announced it would shut down the company's first unionized store in Quebec on May 6. The company decision to close the store in Jonquière, north of Quebec City, and throw 190 people out of work, has provoked widespread discussion among working people in Canada.

Wal-Mart is the largest private sector employer in the world with 1.4 million workers.

The Wal-Mart owners' move came after Quebec labor minister Michel Despres told the company and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the union representing the workers, that he had agreed to a union demand for binding arbitration for a contract. In Quebec, either party may seek binding arbitration from the government for their first contract if the union and bosses fail to reach a negotiated agreement.

A company spokesperson blamed the workers for the closure of the store. Andrew Pelletier, a Wal-Mart Canada director, told *La Presse*, "They are the ones who slammed the door shut by asking for the intervention of an arbitrator. We estimate that in order to respond to union demands just concerning hours of work, we would have to hire 30 new employees. In addition, the union wanted to make basic changes to the status of employees by redefining who is considered full-time and part-time."

The workers at the Jonquière store won union recognition last August after the UFCW turned in union cards signed by a majority of workers. In the province of Quebec, workers may win union representation if a majority sign union cards.

"Our first motivation for the struggle is to fight injustice, and I would do it again anytime," Sylvie Lavoie, who was involved in the fight for the union, told the *Militant* last October. "There was an injustice going on because there was no respect for senior-

ity—newly hired workers earned more than the others."

Workers at the Jonquière store said they make around \$8 (US\$6.48) an hour. Full-timers work 28 hours a week while part-timers average 12 hours. They also complained about arbitrary treatment by managers who ignore seniority, and other anti-union abuses.

"Staying union-free is a full-time commitment," states the Wal-Mart handbook for managers, according to the *Nation* magazine. "The commitment to stay union-free must exist at all levels of management—from the Chairperson of the 'Board' down to the front-line manager. The time involved is...365 days per year."

At a February 11 press conference held in Jonquière, Henri Massé, president of the Quebec Federation of Labour, demanded that the government go ahead with naming



Jacques Boissinot/Canadian Press
Pierre Martineau, left, and Patrice Bergeron, in front of Wal-Mart store in Jonquière, Quebec, in September. They helped organize workers into the United Food and Commercial Workers union at this store. The bosses have announced they will close the store in May to block the signing of a union contract.

an arbitrator to settle the first contract at the store. The UFCW announced it would file charges against Wal-Mart for bargaining in bad faith.

The unions also said they will push ahead

with the effort to unionize other Wal-Mart stores. In all, the UFCW says it has filed for union recognition at 12 stores across Canada.

At the Wal-Mart in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, 60 kilometers (38 miles) east of Montreal, the union was certified in January. The company is contesting this before the Quebec Superior Court. Workers at a store in Brossard, a Montreal suburb, filed cards last July but have yet to receive a response from the labor board. There the company is challenging an order from the government agency, which instructed the bosses to stop interfering with the unionization of the employees.

And in Saskatchewan, a province in western Canada, the company is challenging an article in the labor code that forbids employers from talking

about the union to workers who are in the process of union certification. In Saskatchewan, Broadcast News reports, workers are trying to organize Wal-Mart stores in North Battleford and Weyburn.

Debate opens in Quebec over public funding for religious, private schools

BY JOE YATES

MONTREAL—Faced with growing opposition to his plans to increase public funding for religious and private education, on January 19 Quebec premier Jean Charest withdrew his proposal to nearly double state financing for private Jewish schools. The increased financing had been announced in December by the minister of education in the Liberal Party provincial government, Pierre Reid, at a ceremony to reopen the library of the United Talmud Torahs school, which had been firebombed last spring. The government aimed to use popular outrage over this anti-Semitic act to gain support for its efforts to increase state aid to religious institutions.

The proposed increase in funding from 60 percent of expenses at Jewish schools to 100 percent—supposedly earmarked for nonreligious programs only—sparked a storm of protests by advocates of the separation of church and state, reflecting the broad historic trend toward secularism. As the debate unfolded, anti-Semitic forces took advantage of the controversy to promote the reactionary lie that plans to increase funding of Jewish schools was the product of a "powerful Jewish lobby" manipulating the government for its own purposes, rather than the ongoing efforts by the ruling class in Quebec to undermine public education.

The separation of church and state is far from complete in Quebec schools. Religious instruction still exists in the big majority of public schools. Eighty-three percent of primary school students and 65 percent of high school students take classes on Christianity, either Catholic or Protestant. Exclusive instruction in other religions, however, such as Judaism and Islam, is not allowed in the public system.

Religious instruction in public schools is contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights. However, in 2000 the Quebec government invoked a clause in the Canadian constitution that permits provincial governments to ignore the charter for five years. The government has until June 30 to renew the

clause for another five years. According to *Le Devoir*, a Montreal daily, the Liberal Party government is planning to invoke this clause again.

Today public education in Quebec is divided along the lines of French-language and English-language school commissions. Prior to 1998 they had been divided along Catholic and Protestant lines. The religious division of all public schools in Montreal and Quebec City was enshrined in 1867 in the Canadian constitution known as the British North America Act.

In practice this separation along religious lines created an education system of segregated schools for the French- and English-speaking populations. The language division of the school system is one of the pillars of the national oppression of the Quebecois.

Eighty percent of Quebec's population speaks French, and face institutionalized oppression and discrimination on the basis of their language. Official unemployment in Quebec stands at 8.4 percent, (the national average is 7 percent). More than one-third of all working people receiving welfare in Canada lived in Quebec in 2003, while Quebecois only make up about one-quarter of the population.

The drop out rate of students in the French system is much higher than for those in the English system. In 1990, 53 per cent of the total French school population graduated the final year of high school, whereas 70 per cent of the English sector graduated. In 2001, for the 25–34 years age group, 20 per cent of Montreal residents had university degrees compared with 26 for Toronto, which is largely English-speaking.

In Quebec, one out of 10 students goes to private schools, the highest percentage of any province in Canada. In Quebec 5.6 per cent of primary school students go to private schools and 17.8 percent to private secondary schools. In Montreal, the respective percentages are 14.6 and 29 percent.

The provincial government covers 60 per cent of the budget for these schools. The only exception up to now had been the 100

percent financing of two Greek schools, which began 20 years ago.

Of the 318 private schools in Quebec, 29 are linked to a nationality or a religious group. There are 16 Jewish schools, seven for Muslims, three for Armenians, two for Greeks and one for Egyptians. One-half of the 7,000 Jewish students in Montreal attend private schools.

Among those who reacted in defense of the public school system was Réjean Parent, the president of the Quebec Union Confederation, who said Jean Charest "has not succeeded in demonstrating the correctness of his government's decision to 100 percent finance ethno-religious schools. This is a very serious decision because it threatens the coexistence and equilibrium we have succeeded in establishing through the years."

The Coalition for the Deconfessionalization of the School System responded to the government's action by calling for the government to end the teaching of Catholicism and Protestantism in public schools.

Expressions of anti-Jewish prejudice were voiced in the capitalist media to give a conspiratorial explanation for Charest's plan to increase the financing of Jewish schools. Vincent Marissal, a columnist for *La Presse*, another Montreal daily, wrote January 19, "It's upsetting, obviously, to see that a rich and well-organized lobby can apparently end up directly influencing fundamental decisions of a government. The Jewish lobby is just that—rich, powerful and organized." A caricature in the same newspaper showed the minister of education dressed as a Hasidic Jew refusing funding to someone with a Sikh-sounding name.

Much of the media coverage of the government decision fueled anti-Semitic sentiment by linking the school funding plan to a Liberal Party fund-raiser organized by Minister of Revenue Lawrence Bergman, who is Jewish. *La Presse* also made mention of Steven Cummings as "an important actor in the Jewish community" who has "unrestricted access" to Charest.

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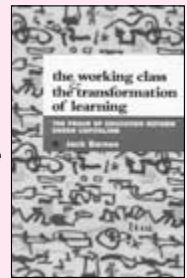
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